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AUTHOR Withnall, A.; And Others
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ABSTRACT

Economic and organizational aspects of adult and continuing education in Great Britain are examined in this report. After chapter 1 introduces various economic approaches to educational policy, chapter 2 reviews the costs and consequences of policies relating to recurrent education and study leave, adult education and training, paid educational leave, and education for the elderly. Chapter 3 explores the structure and finance of adult and continuing education, including an examination of experiences in Scandinavia, England, and Wales. In chapter 4, the organizational forms and financial policies of adult and continuing education are discussed in terms of the roles of the universities; the Open University; the polytechnics; local education authorities; voluntary bodies; directed private study, distance education, and open learning systems; private agencies; residential education; provision for the disadvantaged; information from outside the United Kingdom; and the broadcasting organizations. Finally, chapter 5 offers conclusions based on the study of adult and continuing education in Great Britain, indicating that the effectiveness of the adult education service has diminished because not enough resources have been allocated to enable the service to maximize its efficiency. An appendix provides a comparison of adult education in West Germany with recent developments in England and Wales. (HB)

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REVIEW OF EXISTING RESEARCH IN ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

VOLUME X

THE ECONOMICS AND ORGANISATION OF ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

BY
WITHNALL, A., OSBORN, M., AND
CHARNLEY, A.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ADULT EDUCATION
(ENGLAND AND WALES)

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VC 830 176

19B De Montfort Street
Leicester
LE1 7GE

Tel; (0533) 551451

THE ECONOMICS AND ORGANISATION OF ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

by Withnall, A., Osborn, M. and Charnley, A.,
with Appendix by Elsdon, K.T.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION - THE ECONOMIST'S APPROACH TO EDUCATION

Economics is the study of the allocation of scarce resources amongst competing ends. The economics of education is a branch of the science which analyses those elements which affect the working capacity of human beings and their influence on production. Human beings are being considered, therefore, from a particular point of view. But educationalists, by tradition, seek a holistic approach to individual development and growth so partial analyses concentrating on one aspect of human activity are often therefore viewed with suspicion. Nevertheless, resources are scarce and it is appropriate that adult educationalists, in common with all those concerned with education, should seek to use resources to maximise returns. Thus there is a case for studying the economic implications of any educational activity, provided the limitations of economic analyses are thoroughly recognised. These are basically two-fold; namely that:

- economics is primarily a quantitative science so important qualitative factors may be ignored;
- nearly every economic statement is based on certain assumptions, and these assumptions, whilst clarifying the arguments, render the application of any economic model to a current situation hazardous.

For example, the 'human capital' theory, which was at the height of its fashion in the late 1960's, seeks to show that an educational investment in human beings yields a stream of income over time which is a product of that capital. All categories of income, thus, describe returns on various forms of capital which may be expressed as rates of interest or return in quantitative terms.[1,2] The assumption behind this theory is that wages tend to be equal to the marginal productivity of labour, a condition which assumes a state of near perfect competition with, amongst other features, a high degree of labour mobility. But by the end of the 1960's it became clear that, in many countries, improvements in education had not led to either increased personal earnings, national economic growth, or fairer income distribution. Indeed, American empirical research suggested that only a small part of observed income changes were attributable to education as compared with other factors such as sex or ethnic origin. Moreover, human capital theory cannot,

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1. Smethurst, R.G., 'Finance, Structure and Efficiency: Economics and Adult Education', in New Directions, Adult Education in the Context of Continuing Education, 1979, DES short Course, 1979; NIAE 1980.
2. M. L. Handa, 'Manipulating educational expenditure', Monograph series 13, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1972.

by definition, take account of that part of the population which is not gainfully employed and which constitutes a large proportion of the clientele of adult education.

The 'human capital' theory did have an effect on attitudes to education; we believe that, in seeking a measurable factor, it stressed the length of initial education and distracted attention from the notion of continuing education.

A more recent theory argues that the labour market is characterised less by wage competition than by job competition. Jobs were looking for suitable people whose main characteristic was 'trainability'. The function of education was not to confer skill, and therefore increased productivity and higher wages on the worker; the process of education was to certify 'trainability' and to confer on the worker a certain status by virtue of this certification. If this 'filter' or 'screening' theory is favoured, we can clearly derive support for continuing education, since according to this theory or model, the screening process in initial education is an important first process and continuing education is a different but equally important second process. Nonetheless, it can be argued that for those who do not get through the screen, the process may inhibit participation in continuing education, which is likely to be seen as irrelevant to the social and economic status to which the screening process has destined them and which, on the whole, they are conditioned to accept.

Another economic approach to adult education has been through the procedures known as cost-benefit analysis. The cost of producing a product is compared with the value of the product that is produced. In its most common form, both the cost and the benefit are described in monetary terms. Individuals' costs have usually been defined as the 'opportunity costs', for example, what, if anything, a student would be earning if employed elsewhere. Clearly one could take into account social costs. Similarly, benefits usually describe the individual's benefits and the social returns which accrue to the entire society.[1] Experience of using cost-benefit analysis in educational conditions had highlighted the following problems: (2,3,4)

1. Smith, R.J., The Measurement of the Economic Benefits of Recreation - a theoretical and empirical study, D. Phil (unpublished), University of Birmingham, 1969.
2. Hatry, H.P., in The Encyclopaedia of Management, ed. Hergel, C., N.J., Reinhold Publishing Corporation, 1963.
3. Steele, M., Cost-Benefit Analysis and the Adult Educator; a Literature Review, New York Syracuse University, 1971.
4. Carpenter, M.B. and Hoggart, S.A., 'Cost Effectiveness Analysis for Educational Planning, Educational Technology, X, No.10, October 1970.

- difficulties in determining the resources required in a programme;
- the misleading nature of a single measure;
- the lack of a developed methodology for cost analysis;
- difficulty in measuring effectiveness;[1]
- the lack of a methodology for estimating the effectiveness of future programmes;
- the need for criteria of effectiveness.

Consequently, cost-benefit techniques, up to 1971, have been limited primarily to educational programmes which lent themselves to achieving economic outputs and were closely associated with industry. Nonetheless, like other evaluative activities the cost-benefit approach has led to a better understanding of the complexities of adult education even when few 'hard data' have been produced. But some economists who are also educationalists argue that any attempt to quantify benefits such as those gained in the process of undergoing training, is doomed to failure. Therefore, they suggest, one should concentrate on costs - particularly on opportunity costs - in deciding various alternative methods of achieving a specific identifiable given end. However, cost as a forgone opportunity cannot be observed, since those opportunities are never taken. Since it relates to something which, by definition, has not happened, it is not the easiest thing to quantify with confidence and, thus, this approach can only be said to provide indications to be used in the evaluation of options.[2]

We have shown, then, that there are several economic models which may be summoned to illuminate, to support or to deny any educational proposal. In addition, what educationalists will do will depend very largely on whether they view education as an investment, a public good, a consumption good or a durable-consumption good, or as a combination of several of these notions. For example, a local authority which sees adult education as an investment will expect returns in the future; if it considers adult education as a durable consumer good it will expect the benefits to accrue over the life-time of the educated; if it sees it as a consumer good, then it is a means of satisfying an individual in the present, that is, a good in competition with all other consumer items.

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1. O'Donoghue, M., Education - an Economic Problem of Resource Allocation, Ph.D. thesis (unpublished), University of Dublin, 1968.

2. Drake, K., 'Explorations in adult education costing', (I) in Research in Education, No. 6, November 1971, (II) in Research in Education, No. 7, May 1972.

All these models and definitions are of importance, for they may be the explicit or implicit spring of national or local policy; we wish to suggest that the evidence for any particular model or theory or definition being applicable to adult education is not by any means overwhelming. Indeed, we may go further. There is overwhelming evidence that the statistical support for any empirical policy is lacking - 'the statistical information we have is abysmal. The fact that we have no idea what "the available resources" are or how they are deployed has not, of course, prevented DES from asking ACACE to promote their most effective deployment'.[1,2] But it may be argued that unless the adult education service is reorganised the cost of collecting reliable statistics would be too high in relation to the benefits. Much of adult education provision is based on capital installations designed and mainly used for other purposes, such as further education colleges and schools and on a part-time teaching staff trained in other fields of education. Similarly, much of the cost is borne by students or volunteers. There is no evidence, that we have read, to suggest that the service is not operated at minimal cost. We are only, therefore, able to say with some certitude that statistics for central or local planning are rough and ready and therefore the economic case for any major reorganisation is not supported by evidence of a statistical nature. In the following pages, we shall discuss several issues that have economic implications but we must confess that the main grounds for arguments are educational or moral, and relate to concepts of social justice and the quality of life.

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1. Smethurst, R.G., 1979

2. See also Woodhall, M., 'The Scope and Costs of the Education and Training of Adults in Britain', ACACE Occasional Paper No. 4, December 1980, for the same view.

2.0 SOME OVERALL PROBLEMS AND ASSOCIATED DEFINITIONS

2.1 Recurrent education and study leave

The idea of Recurrent Education was invented by the Swedish U 68 Educational Commission Reports of 1969 and 1970.[1] Charged with the responsibility for developing an overall plan for post-secondary education in Sweden, the Commission U 68 (1973) suggested:

- postponement of post-compulsory schooling, in effect educating older rather than younger individuals;
- second-chance education for an adult clientele, in educating older individuals who had never been educated to present minimum standards.

These far-reaching proposals were aimed to satisfy certain objectives, such as:

- reducing the inequality in educational attainments among the generations;
- strengthening a sense of common values in the community;
- improving the motivation of students;
- linking the educational system more closely to the world of work.[2]

The Faure Report of 1972 - 'Learning to Be' - supported the Swedish notions arguing for 'schooling' to be interspersed with work throughout the life time of an individual. The ILO 49th Session of the International Labour Conference promoted paid educational leave, the principle of educational leave from work with pay, as a new labour right, and thenceforth paid educational leave was seen as a means of achieving and evolving a new style of recurrent education.

There is no internationally acceptable working definition of recurrent education. The usual one quoted is that of Stoikov (1975), that recurrent education and training is:

> 'a global system containing a variety of programmes which distribute education and training at different levels (primary, secondary and tertiary), by formal and non-formal means, over the life span of the individual in a recurring way, that is, alternated with work or other activities.'[3]

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1. But see the 1919 Report para 58 - Report of the Adult Education Committee of the Ministry of Reconstruction.
2. Blaug, M. and Mace, J., 'Recurrent Education - the New Jerusalem', in Higher Education, Vol. 6 (1977), pp. 277-299.
3. Stoikov, V., The Economics of Recurrent Education and Training, International Labour Office, Geneva, 1975 - part of the World Employment Programme Research Project in Education, Training and Employment.

It is difficult to specify the economic consequences of the introduction of recurrent education without knowing precisely the actual application of this 'global system'. The central issue, however, is how the cost of recurrent education is to be shared between students (workers), employers and tax payers because this will largely determine who will be educated and in what fashion. A partial answer to this question may be found by reference to the economic aspects of experience in different countries.

In Sweden, the application of recurrent education has centered on the development of outreach centres and on the provision of paid educational leave. The number of students in outreach centres increased from 445,799 to 716,225 from 1970 to 1973; in addition an expansion took place in the provision of evening classes at municipal high schools, in national schools and in people's high schools. A Study Leave Law of 1975 gave the right to leave for educational purposes during working hours but failed to guarantee paid educational leave because it included no provision for financing leave of absence. Thus in 1977 it could be said that provision for recurrent education in Sweden fell short of the notions outlined by Stoikov.

In West Germany, educational study leave was available for some 2.2 million workers by 1973, but only a fraction of these workers received paid leave. Indeed, the Labour Market Promotion Act 1969 obliged both employers and employees to contribute together a percentage of fixed monthly earnings which was a function of income earned, so that the provision militated against low-paid workers. Moreover, most courses were vocational; the Labour Market Promotion Act only provided aid for vocational courses.

The French have an impressive legislative structure for recurrent education. However, it has been shown that the rate of participation was higher for workers in large firms than in small ones, higher for skilled workers and managers and higher for male workers. Thus the equity objective, of equalising education and training opportunities between different social groups did not appear to have been achieved, nor was there evidence of postponing post-compulsory formal education to the later years of a working life or of providing a general education for adults who had missed a chance to study earlier on.

In Yugoslavia, the educational system was overhauled so as to virtually abolish the concept of sequential, uninterrupted schooling for all states beyond the primary one. Study leave from work in in Yugoslavia was encouraged by a legal right to attend courses during working hours with an entitlement to full pay. About 12% of workers enrol annually in various forms of education and training, the bulk of enrolments being for vocational

or professional preparation. Given the strong official support for recurrent education in Yugoslavia and the fact that it costs individuals nothing more than leisure time forgone, there is some evidence that the demand for formal study among adults, which is assumed by protagonists of recurrent education, may be overestimated. But the evidence we have seen does not indicate whether it is the same 12% of people who enrol each year. The economic point that Blaug and Mace [1] seem to be making appears to be that made by Charnley, [2] and by Woodhall, [3] namely, that experience in several countries suggests that no more than 10 to 15% of the working force will take up opportunities for recurrent education during working hours in the course of any one financial year.

It has been argued that much of the provision for adult education in the United Kingdom offers opportunities for recurrent education. [4] But as Killeen and Bird [5] have shown, those who have most opportunities for educational leave, paid or not, are those in the skilled, management and professional classes.

The situation in the United States differs from state to state, but there is no doubt that the Carnegie Commission Report, 'Toward a Learning Society: Alternative Channels to Life and Work' (1973), furthered the ideas of recurrent education in that country. In certain states or areas, the provision for a system of recurrent education seems impressive; Miami Dade University in Florida [6] and the State of New York provision have been cited as examples. But the various studies of H.A. Levine (1977) indicate that participation rates are 'low' and that the courses taken up are usually for vocational purposes.

Thus, in summary:

- there is no example of a mature or complete system of recurrent education in any country in Western Europe or North America. Con-

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1. Blaug, M. and Mace, J., ibid

2. Charnley, A.H., Paid Educational Leave in France, Sweden and West Germany, NIAE, 1975.

3. Woodhall, M., The Scope and Costs of the Education and Training of Adults in Britain, ACACE, No. 4, December 1980.

4. See Review of Research, Vol. I, 'Mature Students', Charnley, A. et al, NIAE, 1979.

5. Killeen, J. and Bird, M., Paid Educational Leave in England and Wales, NIAE, 1981. (Published as "Education and Work")

6. McIntosh, N., quoted in Education, Vol. 159, No. 14, April 1982.

sequently, there is no method of citing practical experiences of costs and benefits; [1]

- in countries which have tried to make an approach towards a recurrent education system, the evidence suggests that:
  - demand in any one year is unlikely to exceed 10 - 15% of the working population; [2]
  - there will be difficulty in recruiting the lower paid groups unless positive steps are taken to recruit them.

The present concentration of resources on initial education does not take into account some fundamental technological and social changes, such as:

- technological changes are more likely to be labour saving than capital saving;
- most human beings will need not one skill for a life-time of work, but rather two or three skills;
- female participation in work will increase the labour force;
- competition from overseas requires a more highly trained labour force.

All the above means that we are entering a world in which some of the labour force seems to be in excess supply. How are those without employment to be paid? How are they to be employed? How are they to occupy their time when not in employment? These are not just economic questions but are also social, political and educational problems. It is argued that recurrent education is a necessity to retrain the working population at intervals in their life-time and to educate those with increasing leisure to use their leisure in a constructive way. 'Thus there is nothing new in principle in suggesting that education and training need not be confined to one stage of life, but are activities relevant to the whole of a person's active existence. What may be regarded as new, even revolutionary, is that an approach to these matters, which already applies to a small minority of the population, should be applied to the whole of the employed labour force.' [3] It is clear that those faced with long-term unemployment and the state which pays unemployment benefits will incur extremely low opportunity costs

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1. Simkins, T., 'Recurrent Education: some economic issues', in Higher Education, Vol. 5, 1976.
2. Charnley, A., Paid Educational Leave in France, Sweden and West Germany, NIAE, 1975.
3. Peston, M., 'Recurrent Education; tackling the financial implications', in Schuller, T. and Megarry, J., Recurrent Education and Life-Long Learning, World Yearbook of Education, Kogan Page, London, 1979.

by providing educational activities. Indeed, in so far as some are able to re-enter the labour market, or provide voluntary services, there will be positive economic or quasi-economic benefits. [1]

Thus, the Advisory Council states, 'continuing education (a phrase often equated with recurrent education) offers one route to adaptability in a world where it is no longer possible to rely on the knowledge and skills acquired in youth. But continuing education cannot be related solely to work. While economic success depends on technical knowledge and skills, the success of specific job training must depend on the general educational abilities of those being trained. Those abilities are most readily formed through the cultural and social aspects of general education'. So far as finance is concerned, there is an implication that the present network of institutions could fulfil the task of providing a comprehensive system if all 'consciously set about opening their doors and providing tuition with adults clearly in mind'. [2,3]

2.2 Adult education and training

So far as some economists are concerned, a distinction may be made between work related education - training - and general education. It is argued that work related training raises the productivity of workers and that the benefits accrue to particular firms so those firms should bear the cost. General education on the other hand is non-specific to any particular job and this should be a state charge; it can only be financed by reducing consumption or by taking resources from some productive activity. In some economic models such a distinction may be useful but there is a danger that it obscures more than clarifies the issues. Economists with a better knowledge of the education processes than their fellows regard training and education as a continuum where there are mixtures of both aspects. 'Much that is recognisably educational goes on in training programmes and there is a good deal which is clearly training to be found in educational

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1. Kallen, D.B.P., 'The economic and financial implications of recurrent education - a critical comment', in Studies in Adult Education, Vol. 7, No. 2, October 1975.

2. Continuing Education - From Policies to Practice, Report of the Advisory Council for Adult and Continuing Education (ACACE, 19B De Montfort Street, Leicester LE1 7GE, price £2.50 post free) released on 2nd April 1982.

3. See also: Digest - Continuing Education to the Year AD 2000, price 25p. from Education, Longman Group, Harlow, Essex, CM19 5AA.

institutions of all kinds.'[1] 'Good training for employment develops skills relevant to all the demands of everyday life including work.'[2] The 1980 balance in expenditure on work-related courses to general adult education courses has been estimated by Woodhall. Training oriented courses (or vocational courses) were thought to account for about one third of the total education budget whereas adult education (the non-vocational sector) is thought to account for less than 1% of total educational resources, even though the numbers of adults taking vocational and non-vocational courses were roughly equal.[3]

2.3 Paid educational leave

'Paid educational leave should be extended in accordance with the ILO Convention 140 to which the United Kingdom Government is a signatory.' This in the view of the Advisory Council would be a first step towards a more extensive entitlement.[4] We have shown above that the introduction of paid educational leave would be unlikely to be taken up by more than 10 - 15% of the population; hence the Advisory Council's view that it is a 'first step'. There is no evidence about the economic cost of the introduction of paid educational leave.

2.4 The elderly and the ageing population

One of the principal economic factors influencing the distribution of resources is the ageing population. About 12 million adults are estimated to have retired; that is about 20% of the total population. This means a movement of resources to support the health and social services essential to their physical welfare. They form a ready clientele for the adult education service and may be regarded as a major resource for educational activities.[5] However, there is little research available on the economic implications of this ageing population distribution for adult education, even though it is clear that the less than 0.5% of total educational expenditure which is now devoted to adult education is barely enough to deal with even this major problem. The Advisory Council has identified older adults and the elderly as one of the priority groups.[6]

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1. Peston, M., 1979
2. ACACE, Continuing Education, 1982
3. Woodhall, M., 1980
4. ACACE, 1982
5. Reviews of Research in Adult and Continuing Education, Vol. II, Withnall, Charnley, Osborn, 'The Elderly', NIAE, 1980.
6. ACACE, Continuing Education, 1982.

3.0 THE STRUCTURE AND FINANCE OF ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

3.1 Structural aspects

The broad principles which animate adult education today are that every adult has a right to adequate opportunities of education and that he/she needs to continue his/her education in adult life. The provision through which these aims may be achieved is varied. Some provision is inherited from past demands and has changed to meet present challenges. Such institutions as the extra-mural departments and the Workers' Educational Association come within this category. Other institutions are the result of new technologies in communication and education, such as the broadcasting institutions and the Open University. Yet other institutions are designed to meet the requirements of special groups or the aspirations to education of local communities. Local authority provision clearly comes within that category. Then there are the voluntary sectors, the private sectors, and various forms of provision which result from the cooperation of institutions. There is, no doubt, a vast amount of learning taking place outside institutions, but it often relies on services such as the libraries. In this section, we shall deal with the basic structures of provision and point to some economic and financial problems that arise from them.

3.2 Some European experiences

According to the Swedish Institute, about 10% of the State's education budget is spent on adult education but, in the view of Kohn, a more realistic comparable figure is about 6%. Education and especially adult education in Sweden is regarded as a crucial service and a wide variety of voluntary bodies are funded by the State. In particular, the Study Circle is viewed as central to both the democratic and educational process. People study in small groups, averaging about twelve participants, in each other's homes or in community buildings owned by a popular movement. Study group leaders do not need formal qualifications but the qualities of leadership that will draw all the participants into an active role within the circle and the ability to help coordinate and organise study material for everyone. These groups operate within the control of ten 'study associations', each controlled by different political parties, churches or popular movements. Each association receives 75% of its income from the State, so the associations pay their study circle leaders even though their appointment is through election by the study circle students.

The 1976 Norwegian Adult Education Act makes subsidies available to all organisations providing adult education, provided that:

- membership of the organisation is open;
- members elect the management of the organisation;
- students have 'the opportunity to exert influence on the organisation and content of courses'. [1,2]

We have quoted the examples of Scandinavian countries because these 'in particular ..... have tried in their procedures to preserve a balance between the claims of voluntary bodies and the needs of the State', [3] a balance which we believe is consonant with British traditions.

3.3 England and Wales

The 1944 Education Act, which with some modifications is still the governing statute for England and Wales, does not mention adult education; it refers to further education full-time and part-time (Section 41a) and leisure-time occupation (Section 41b). But four sectors of an adult education system may be identified:

- the public sector, central and local government in partnership and the public authorities and autonomous bodies (such as the voluntary bodies), again in partnership;
- industrial training, such as Manpower Services Commission activities;
- the private sector, such as the correspondence/distance learning colleges;
- agencies of non-formal education, such as the Women's Institutes.

The outstanding general characteristic of British adult education is plurality. The system includes:

- the local education authority sector, itself quite varied and including a large craft/recreational programme;
- the universities - the extra-mural/adult education departments;
- the Open University;
- voluntary organisations working within the public education system, with the support of government funds and within a governmental regulatory framework;

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1. Kohn, R., Enforced Leisure; Enforced Education, Fabian Tract 478, Fabian Society, London, 1982.

2. See also: Titmus, C., 'Proposed theoretical model for the comparative study of national adult education systems in Europe', in Society and Leisure, Vol. 8, No. 2, 1976.

3. Titmus, C., Strategies for Adult Education, Practices in Western Europe, O.U. Press, Milton Keynes, 1981.

- a large non-formal sector characterised by organisations such as the Women's Institutes, which often overlaps and cooperates in the more formal provision of the local authority sector;
- industrial training under government auspices as well as in private firms and industrial corporations;
- a substantial private sector (in 1968, 15 European countries reported that adult education was generally in the hands of private organisations); [1]
- variants of all the above in England and Wales/Scotland/Northern Ireland.

It is argued that this complex system of provision has the educational ability to respond to the requirements of any group seeking any particular variety of adult education. Surveys have suggested that roughly 40% of the adult population have, at some time since leaving school or college, voluntarily engaged in adult education, [2] which also means that some 60% have not used the system. But up to 1978 'the demand for adult education has been rising in the last two decades as the direct and inescapable result of the preceding growth and extension of initial education; it is still rising and will continue to do so ..... one authority, not a large one - and which had actually increased, not decreased its provision - writes of the bitter experience of having to turn away over 2,000 students, and many echo this'. [3] Thus, our consideration of the economics and finance of adult education is against a background of a rising educational demand.

In 1981, Small [4] reported the results of his study of eleven local education authorities. He found that:

- the largest providers of non-vocational adult education at public expense were the local education authorities;
- LEA's accounted for approximately eight times the numbers provided for by the 'responsible bodies' - the universities and WEA;

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1. Amberg, H., 'Financial structure of adult education in Europe', in Convergence, Vol. 3, No. 1, 1970.

2. Jennings, B., Adult Education in Britain, its Organisation and Structure, Newland Papers No. 3, Department of Adult Education, University of Hull, 1981.

3. Mee, G. and Wiltshire, H., Structure and Performance in Adult Education, London and New York, Longman, 1978.

4. Small, N., 'Policy by default? Changing patterns in local education authority adult education in Britain', in Policy and Research in Adult Education, Nottingham International Colloquium, University of Nottingham, 1981.

- the provision of courses was described by Mee (1980) [1] as - 53.1% craft and aesthetic skills, 24.1% physical skills, 16.7% cognitive and intellectual skills, 6.1% courses for disadvantaged groups;
- adult education was a local service with little national structure;
- the average of the 105 LEA's employed as full-time staff the equivalent of the staff of a small primary school - these were usually organisers;
- most teachers were part-time;
- the average LEA expenditure on adult education equalled 0.4% of their educational budget in 1980/81, compared to 0.66% in 1975;
- the increase in fees (to offset the fall in public expenditure) has resulted in the dichotomy of a highly priced service for the well off and a heavily subsidised compensatory service for the conspicuously disadvantaged; [2]
- adult education as part of LEA provision was of little concern generally to major committees because the resources allocated to it have been so small as to merit little attention.

Small (1981) implies that adult education - in the non-vocational sector - is a marginal economic activity within total local education finance. It is so much so that in some local authority areas costs are often absorbed into those of their colleges of further education where those colleges are major providers. In other cases costs are divided between various services provided by a community education centre, such as are being used by the youth service and the adult service. As Small writes, 'it is difficult, probably impossible, to make useful comparisons between authorities. Costs are calculated in different ways - elements for heat and light and part-time teachers' superannuation may be included to various degrees'. Thus, Small found one LEA claimed to spend £1 million on adult provision out of a budget of £100 million (1%), and another, £150,000 out of a budget of £50 million (0.3%), but as the basis for these calculations differed, what useful purpose do these figures fulfil?

Obviously, the total national public expenditure on adult education will depend on how much the students contribute by way of fees. A variety of fee structures exists,for example:

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1. Mee, G., Organisation for Adult Education, Longman, London, 1980.
2. See Mee, G. and Wiltshire, H., Structure and Performance in Adult Education, Longman, London, 1978, p.112.

- no fee for basic level education;
- some fee for education that any authority may wish to encourage;
- economic fees for some forms of education;
- fee remission for certain categories of students, such as old age pensioners, the unemployed and so on.

Most authorities have a two-tier system together with remissions.

'Economic' fees seem to be defined extremely arbitrarily: in one authority, economic fees, generally quoted at an hourly rate, ranged from 35 pence to 100 pence. In one authority an economic fee was defined as the teacher's fee plus 150%; in another authority 50% was added to the teacher's fee.[1] But as we have already written, the adult education provision in England and Wales is one which seeks to offer a service to a multiplicity of groups, in a variety of locations, in many circumstances. Thus, for example, a group with its own voluntary leader may be offered a spare classroom during the day time in a school. It could be argued, quite rationally, that the marginal cost to the local authority of such an arrangement is so small as not to be worth the accounting staff time to present a bill. On the other hand, opening a large school building may incur high caretaking, heating and security costs. There may be a case for many local variations of fee charges where these charges appear to be based on economic costs but there is no evidence to hand to suggest that any single class is totally unsubsidised though some particular classes show an apparent accounting profit. But as Small comments, the result of working on financial and related data is that new educational priorities are emerging which are not solely based on educational needs. A spectrum has emerged of:

- a great deal of unregistered work of one sort or another existing everywhere;
- at one end, relatively low fees and diversified but still heavily traditional programmes backing up an ABE sector that is still quite strong in full-time appointments; typically with strong support from officers and elected members;
- in the middle, a service placed in firm financial constraints, rising fees, with ABE provided but with no or virtually no full-time staff, and limited resources with which to respond to need, attitudes of full-time officers variable but elected members not committed to defending the sector;

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1. Small, N., 1981

- at the other end, a service operating within constraints but concerned to reflect new opportunities, looking away from classes, numbers and book balancing to the fundamental purposes of adult education, committed to staff training and involving the elected members, where possible, in thinking through new developments.

This model oversimplifies; the majority of authorities are in the middle.

The result of these trends has been a concentration on adult education as:

- remedial education;
- compensatory education;
- competency education.[1]

Yet these reactions to financial stresses may be inimical to preparing for an era when leisure may increase. The threat to the less intellectual, more practical subjects, with overtones of hobbies and do-it-yourself, those courses concerned with knowing how to benefit from leisure, with self-expression and balanced self-development and affective education, have a bearing on the quality of individual life and on society's well-being which are impossible to express in economic terms. 'Further, there is no over-arching commitment to democratic ideals at a time of what may be expected to be increasing social unrest and possible political instability'.[2]

Davies et al, from a study of a particular area in a local education authority conducted in 1981 as a follow-up to a similar study in 1976,[3] reported that:

- between 1976 and 1981 the total number of students had declined. Fees increased 240%, retail prices 87%, services 88% and transport and vehicles 96% in the same period;
- the number of higher level manual working class students decreased by 10%;
- the number of lower level working class students decreased by 5%;
- the number of older students of 55 years and over decreased by 8%;
- the number of retired women decreased by 4%;
- the number of housewives decreased by 3%;
- first time enrolments where job related motives were expressed increased from 10% to 22%.

1,2 Small, N., 1981

3 Daines, J., Elsey, B., Gibbs, M., Changes in Student Participation in Adult Education in a Selected Area of Derbyshire, Department of Adult Education, University of Nottingham, 1982.

In their view, the main changes in participation were due to the economics of fee charges whose effect bears particularly hard on the relatively less wealthy, the housewives and older people.

Taking a world perspective, Lowe (1975) wrote 'it is essential to have a comprehensive planning strategy, though this does not rule out a pluralistic pattern of provision'.[1] In England and Wales there was no such strategy but central government, through its financial policy, in practice often determines the local philosophy and practice of adult education. This development in the area of the major providers, the local education authorities, has, we suggest, implications for the organisation of adult education as a whole.[2]

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1. Lowe, J., The Education of Adults: a World Perspective, UNESCO, Paris, 1975.

2. See Townsend Coles, E.K., Adult Education in Developing Countries, Second Edition, Pergamon Press, Oxford, 1977, p.82, for reasons why in general adult education continues to be under-financed in relation to the tasks to be undertaken - a statement equally applicable to the United Kingdom.

4.0 ORGANISATIONAL FORMS AND FINANCIAL POLICIES

According to the Russell Report, in 1968/69 net expenditure on non-vocational adult education formed barely 1% of the national educational budget or less than £10 per year for each of the two million adult students. These consisted of:

- 1.7 million in LEA provision;
- 0.3 million in 'responsible' and voluntary bodies. [1]

The definitional division between non-vocational and vocational adult education has been translated into a distinction between work-oriented and general education. But more important are the concepts of 'initial' education - school and college - and 'post-initial' education which embraces all types of study, formal or informal, full or part-time, which is undertaken after a break of years. As such, continuing education involves a wide range of statutory and non-statutory bodies, from the Department of Education and Science and local education authorities to universities and polytechnics, to grant-aided 'responsible bodies' like the Workers' Educational Association, the national and local voluntary bodies like the Women's Institutes. It involves, beyond the DES, other governmental departments and bodies: the Manpower Services Commission; prisons and hospitals; the defence services; social welfare departments etc. It involves Industrial Training Boards, the CBI and the TUC and their affiliates, the BBC and the IBA, distance learning institutions, libraries, museums and art centres, and of equal importance, autonomous groups of individuals learning together for some purpose which incorporates an educational feature.

The case for statutory involvement and public financial support to prime this pattern of provision is as follows:

- rapid technological change demands training and retraining and also more general education to increase the flexibility and mobility of labour, and an increase of services complementary to increased leisure, including general education. All these activities are economic benefits;
- adult education is a vehicle of social change through which the individual's role can be more responsibly discharged in society, in industry, in voluntary work and in public work. Social and political education is designed to enable an individual to understand and play

1. Russell Report: Adult Education: a Plan for Development, London, HMSO, 1973.

his part as citizen, voluntary worker, consumer. Democracy requires participation; constructive participation involves study;

- a truly open system of adult and continuing education brings people together to learn from each other; it is the cement which brings society together. Of course it is difficult to prove the economic value of this, but one may point to ghettos throughout history which have led to malice, injustice, and economic wastage.

Since 1973, under the guidance of Ministers, the Department of Education and Science has not positively guided the local education authorities. The exception was the foundation of the Adult Literacy Resource Agency in 1975 - an act of faith which resulted in a force of some 80,000 volunteers teaching a quarter of a million adults whose contact with adult education had been minimal. Hence adult and continuing education has turned for support to less inhibited government agencies such as the Manpower Services Commission, the Department of Health and Social Security and the Home Office, and this has given rise to problems of coherence and coordination. Indeed, it is a remarkably dangerous development in the sense that much of the experience, expertise and knowledge of the DES may be denied to the adult education service and there could well be a tendency for the DES to concentrate on initial education at the expense of continuing education.[1]

The main provision is by local education authorities, which in this climate have often taken advantage of the lack of statutory backing to cut back adult education. Though the picture is an uneven one - four out of five LEAs have sought to preserve the service in some limited form - the effect has been that between 1975 and 1980 overall provision of adult education classes fell by over 25% and fees charged to students increased over five-fold. Could the gap be filled by voluntary bodies?

There are voluntary bodies catering for different social needs with education often as a secondary but related purpose. The National Federation of Women's Institutes, with over 9,000 local branches in the countryside, the National Union of Townswomen's Guilds, with nearly 3,000 branches, and the 750 clubs of the National Association of Women's Clubs, involve hundreds of thousands of women in collective discussion groups and informal studies. Pre-School Playgroups bring in young parents, the Pre-Retirement

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1. See: The Funding and Organisation of Courses in Higher Education, Select Committee of House of Commons Report, for a similar argument in the Higher Education field.

Association the older citizens, the National Federation of Community Organisations, political leaders of local opinion. Trade Unions have an educational role as does the Cooperative Education Department. The broadcasters provide an educational floor upon which to build learning experiences in statutory and non-statutory supported groups.

But the statutory bodies, mainly the local education authorities, have a dual role:

- to provide a direct service;
- to develop, encourage and support through voluntary organisations.

And there are very few voluntary bodies or groups which can themselves provide training, accommodation, group leaders, advertising, secretarial services etc. Most, if not all, look for some publicly financed support in one or more of these aspects. For example, the Workers' Educational Association depends on the DES for 75% of its teaching costs; many local voluntary bodies depend on grants and subsidised accommodation. Thus, the pattern of adult education is not one based on voluntary versus or alternative to/statutory, but on cooperation between all agencies, specialisation on occasion, and on some basic financial support from public funds. The economics of adult and continuing education mean that if the local education authorities cut their adult education budget by 10%, this has more than a 10% effect on the total service. Each reduction of 1% in that part of the authorities' expenditure which supports voluntary bodies and volunteers has the effect of reducing the total service by a figure greater than 1% - a multiple.[1] What we would like to know is the nature and the size of the volunteer-in-education multiplier.

A group of experts, meeting in 1979, conjectured that adult education could best be viewed as a sector within a network of social institutions or sectors but nonetheless adult education was readily recognised as a function which had its own professional field and expertise. For example, the main activities of adult education - personal development, experimentation, teaching, counselling - had roles within social institutions or sectors such as the universities, the health service, community work, and the churches. Their main conclusion, based on experience, was that there was an absence of real evidence that effective cooperation took place in, for example, the sectors of education, employment or leisure (retirement). They accepted that adult education had to function within a total network.

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1. All the above is based on Hughes, H.D., 'Roles and functions in adult and continuing education; statutory and voluntary bodies', in Educational Analysis, Vol. 3, No. 3, 1981.

but thought 'its own existing internal organisation and structure was far from perfect'. It was a system of provision dominated by institutional 'supply' but there was a greater need to devise a system of provision much more responsive to student 'demand'. To achieve this, the complicated network of provision should be coordinated in such a way that the student knows the alternatives before him and financial arrangements should be made to allow the students to determine the allocation of resources most likely to meet his needs. [1] Thus the present financial arrangements of feeding resources directly through existing institutions may preserve the multiplicity of providers, but they do not seem to engender cooperation between providers. Nor do they encourage a student who may require educational help from more than one provider or who needs to choose between providers. In economic language, the student, as consumer, operates in a highly imperfect market.

4.1 The Universities

Writing in 1951, Raybould argued that universities through their extra-mural departments were providing too many elementary courses which could be better handled by the Workers' Educational Association. He considered that universities should promote systematic thought and enquiry about adult education as a distinctive branch of study. [2] He returned to that theme in 1964 and argued that the system of finance under which the extra-mural courses of universities received special earmarked grants from the Department of Education and Science led to a waste of resources. [3] In 1976, Ellwood [4] remarked that 'financially, university adult education appeared well-endowed'. They received a DES grant towards teaching costs and an administration and accommodation grant from the University Grants Committee. The balance of teaching costs was covered by each individual

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1. New Directions: Adult Education in the Context of Continuing Education, DES Short Course Programme, 1979; a group report on Structure, Organisation and Resources, 1980, available from NIAE.

2. Raybould, S.G., A Critical Study of the Organisation of University Extra-mural Work in England, Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1951.

3. Raybould, S.G., University Extra-mural Education in England, 1945 - 1962; a study of finance and policy, London, Michael Joseph, 1964.

4. Ellwood, G.E., Adult Learning Today; a New Role for the Universities, Sage Studies in Social and Educational Change, Vol. 4, Sage Publications, London, 1976, based on 'University Adult Education Departments in England - Present Trends and Possible Developments', Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1975.

university allocating a part of its own overall UGC grant. Additional finance came from student fees, LEA grants and other sources.

> 'New forms and functions are enmeshed in a system of financial regulations, precedents, local traditions, Ministry memoranda and departmental makeshifts which are in need of overhaul, simplification and streamlining. To rationalise such a system would need a major piece of economic research involving a study of how university adult education receives and spends its money from all sources, together with an analysis of aims and objectives.'

The main problem appears to be that the Direct Grant from the DES is earmarked for adult education, whereas funds from the UGC are not; thus much depends on the university's allocation of UGC source finance. The Russell Committee, page 69, para 206, recommended that the direct grant principle should be maintained for university adult education - an earmarked grant - but did not recommend that the UGC should give a special earmarked grant. The situation was somewhat confused in that the DES grant was a yearly grant whereas the universities themselves worked on a quinquennial system. But many university authorities value the safety of two sources of grant.

Smethurst, in 1981, noted that in the twenty years from 1958 the work of extra-mural departments (defined to include all university departments specifically concerned with adult education) more than doubled, measured by courses, and increased two and a half times measured by student enrolments. Finance had risen by 80% in real terms compared with a 40% rise in real GNP; indeed, up to 1973/74 it had more than doubled. Since 1973, it fell by 10%. He argued that the signs that public expenditure would decrease were discernible in 1975 and universities would bear their share. In 1960 the DES grant met 70.5% of grant-aided teaching costs; in 1978/79, it met 73%. In real terms the DES subsidy per course declined, in the same period, from £143 to £97 (taking the base as the retail price index of 1970). The DES subsidy in real terms per student was £4.39 in 1981 compared with £6.90 in 1960.

In 1958/59, teaching costs, full and part-time, including travel, were 69% of total costs. By 1978/79 they were 56%; thus the DES grant covered a higher proportion of teaching costs which were themselves a smaller proportion of total costs. Administration costs rose in the same period from 11% to 29% of total costs and non-grant aided expenditure increased nearly fourfold to 15%. In the same period average course

costs (1970 pounds) fell from £292 for each of 4,741 courses mounted in 1958/59 to £235 for 10,707 courses mounted in 1978/79.

He drew a comparison with the extension divisions of the University of California. There the total number of courses (1979/80) of 10,641 was comparable with the 1978/79 figure for the whole of the extra-mural work under the auspices of the UCAE (10,707 courses). But there the similarity ended for the University of California had:

- only one fifth of the proportion of public funds enjoyed in Britain;
- average classes of 36 compared to 22 in Britain;
- at least four times as much income earned per staff member as in Britain (the figures for California included all employees);

and, the University of California spent 14.4% of total costs on promotion, i.e. 5.9 million dollars in 1979/80.

These figures were offered as a basis to pose certain questions, namely:

- do larger departments mount comparable classes at lower cost? The evidence in the United Kingdom was not conclusive as some large departments reported low total costs per enrolment, but others had high costs;
- what do we know about the comparative efficiency of departments? Apparently little can be deduced from published data in Britain;
- is the full-time staff tutor the right kind of appointment? The expenditure on marketing in California suggests that one marketing specialist per department could lead to a more efficient use of other resources.

In his view, the preservation of university adult education will depend on the response to financial constraints which appear to threaten the DES grant system in a period when UGC finance is also severely constrained.[1] We reiterate that we have no conclusive evidence to show that university provided courses are inefficient. Indeed, it could be argued that they are insufficiently funded to carry out the research and training functions so important to the adult education service as a whole. There are distinct disadvantages in pressing the California comparison too much; for example, would it mean the universities extending into lower level courses in direct competition with LEA provision? Nor

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1. Smethurst, R.G., The Financing of Adult and Continuing Education in the Universities. Address given at the Annual Conference of the Universities Council for Adult Education, University of Liverpool, 14th April 1981.

does it necessarily follow that a Secretary of State for Education would withdraw financial support from university adult education if it could be proved that through their specialist activities in research and training their contribution to the quality of the total adult education service effected substantial total financial savings.

In a recent response to the report of ACACE, 'Continuing Education; from policies to practice', Fordham suggests that the English university extra-mural departments should:

- recognise that for heterogeneous groups of adult students flexible organisations are needed to make knowledge accessible in forms appropriate to adult experience;
- acknowledge that suitable student groups are not as easily identifiable as, say, homogeneous professional cadres;
- involve themselves in stimulating demand - vide the Open University experience.

To effect these criteria, the extra-mural department staff should consist of the type of persons who can seek out new opportunities and new student groups and should appreciate the possibilities of studies across existing subject and faculty boundaries.

The financial implications of the above suggest, in Fordham's view, that:

- the distinction between 'extra-mural' work subsidised by the DES, and continuing education where fee income covers costs, should be abolished. Extra-mural departments should be able to balance expenditure in the interests of adult and continuing education as a whole;
- 'organising tutor' type posts need to be increased and the output of such posts judged by part-time teaching hours generated rather than by the direct teaching hours personally achieved;
- specialist teaching where required should be 'bought in' by the extra-mural organising staff from specialist subject departments. [1]

The above recommendations would reverse the trend in the direction of appointing specialist subject lecturers in extra-mural departments, but at present a department's efficiency seems to be measured by student numbers and courses. One could equally measure it by research output, training activities for all the social services and by their contribution to the social aspects of management in commerce and industry.

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1. Fordham, P., 'The impediments to change in continuing education', Times Higher Education Supplement, 2.7.82.

Further, Elsdon [1] noted that the Standing Conference on University Teaching and Research in the Education of Adults could be potentially an important national organisation which could contribute to the maximisation of the scarce resources which are available to training and research. Any research into efficiency could well take into account the work of SCUTREA and the Universities Council for Adult and Continuing Education.

4.2 The Open University

In 1972, Wagner [2] attempted to make cost comparisons between the Open University and conventional universities in order to give some broad indications of the cost differences between the two types of institutions in teaching students and producing graduates. He suggested that, in spite of conceptual and statistical problems, four comparisons could be made, to wit:

- the average recurrent cost per equivalent undergraduate in the OU was a little more than a quarter of that in conventional universities;
- the capital cost per student place was about 6% of the conventional university figure;
- the average recurrent cost per graduate indicated that the cost at the two types of institution would be equalised if the OU had a drop-out rate of 85%;
- the resource cost per equivalent undergraduate at the OU was about one sixth of that at conventional universities.

These cost advantages were, according to Wagner, not mainly due to the part-time nature of the students but to the method of teaching at the Open University.

These conclusions have been extended by Laidlow and Layard. [3] They concentrated on the direct (instructional) cost of the OU teaching methods as compared to conventional live instruction by finding out the costs, not of the OU as a whole, but of the individual courses it actually provided. Their figures were based on OU budgets and a cross sectional study of the current costs of all British universities in 1968/69. [4] They

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1. Elsdon, K.T., Training for Adult Education, NIAE, 1975.
2. Wagner, L., 'The economics of the Open University', in Higher Education, Vol. I, No. 2, May 1972.
3. Laidlow, B. and Layard, R., 'Traditional versus Open University teaching methods: a cost comparison', in Higher Education, Vol.3, No.4, November, 1974.
4. Layard, P.R.G. and Verry D., Cost Functions for Teaching and Research in UK Universities, LSE Higher Education Research Unit, 1973 (mimeo).

considered that Wagner had justified the existence of the Open University on the basis that the OU had an average cost per full-time-equivalent student equal to one half of that of conventional universities. Given the low ratio of marginal to average costs at the OU, it should therefore expand. But this study was necessarily aggregative and based on arbitrary assumptions about what the University would be like when it reached a steady state. Laidlow et al concluded that:

- the variable cost per student-course was, with one exception, lower in the OU than elsewhere. This constituted a strong case for the use of existing OU packages at campus universities and for expanding existing courses at the OU;
- foundation courses were much cheaper than equivalent provision 'de novo' in the same scale at campus universities;
- some second-level courses at the OU were operating at levels which, if there were no interdependence between courses, might be considered expensive. But if used by more OU students or by campus universities, they could be economic, even when taken on their own;
- student time was not costed, but if this were cheaper when OU methods were used this would be an additional argument in favour of the OU.

The cost advantage of the Open University in general has not been contested, but Carter [1] has pointed out that the Open University and campus universities are not the same. In his view, Wagner suggests that those who can pass the same examination have had the same education. Full-time university education is a different kind of educational experience, not better, simply different. Further, Carter suggests that expensive subjects (such as medicine) which the Open University could not conceivably provide have been used in calculating the expenditure of conventional universities. Expenditure on non-teaching activities in conventional universities was ignored by Wagner; but these were significant - for example if Lancaster University had only undergraduates to teach, then:

- 6 - 7% of all recurrent expenditure on the library would be saved;
- 2% of all recurrent expenditure on the computer;
- 2 - 3% of all recurrent expenditure on administration;
- 3 - 4% of all recurrent expenditure on maintenance of premises;
- savings on staff and other costs would also be possible if non-teaching activities were reduced to the Open University level.

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1. Carter, C.F., 'The economics of the Open University; a comment', in Higher Education, Vol. 2, 1973.

Moreover, at least two thirds of all the science buildings in Lancaster University would not be needed if the nature and level of the work to be done were equivalent to the science courses of the Open University. Conversely, Carter did not consider that Wagner made sufficient allowance for Open University costs, both recurrent and capital, that were carried by others, for example the use of the public libraries provided by the local authorities. But nonetheless, the Open University should be cheaper than the conventional university, for 'no-one would question that part-time students must be cheaper than full-time students'.

Wagner, in a reply, refuted some of Carter's criticisms, namely that:

- if expensive subjects such as medicine were taken into account, the effect on recurrent cost would be to reduce the conventional university cost per equivalent undergraduate by about £40;
- Lancaster University <u>total</u> expenditure on the library was just over 7% of recurrent expenditure (according to DES statistics); therefore, 6 - 7% would not be saved from having no postgraduates;
- deficiencies in capital cost comparison were accepted but were due to a lack of accurate data;
- free services, such as library services, were also available to campus university students so should not be ascribed solely to OU students;
- social benefit to the community may be legitimately measured by future earnings of graduates, and until there was proof to the contrary, these would be the same for graduates of the Open University and for conventional graduates. [1]

In his latest study, Wagner [2] notes that there had been little reduction in average costs, in real terms, since 1973 and no improvement was likely on known developments. Though student numbers grew, leading to a tendency for average costs to fall, the increase in the number of courses, which tends to raise costs, was faster. Thus economies provided by increased student numbers had been used to increase student choice through the provision of more courses rather than to reduce average cost.

As a conclusion to this economic debate, it might be useful to quote from Mace [3] who wrote: 'previous studies of the Open University

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1. Wagner, L., 'The economics of the Open University; a reply', in <u>Higher Education</u>, Vol. 2, 1973.
2. Wagner, L., 'The economics of the Open University revisited', in <u>Higher Education</u>, Vol. 6, August 1977.
3. Mace, J., 'Mythology in the making. Is the Open University really cost effective?', in <u>Higher Education</u>, Vol. 7, 1978.

that purport to show that it out-performs conventional universities in terms of "openness" and costs per graduate ..... suffer from serious methodological shortcomings, which when taken into account show that there are no grounds for complacency on either count ..... more data would be needed to do cost effective analysis properly and I contend that if these data were raised, which would involve getting academics to spell out their aims, the cost effectiveness of the Open University could be raised substantially ..... I have also assumed that my preoccupation with costs and benefits will not be construed as evidence that no account should be taken of the non-economic costs and benefits of educational policies ..... my position is simply that where economic costs and benefits are involved they must be considered by policy makers'.

Since 1980 there have been some publications about the implications of the Open University's involving itself in continuing adult education.[1] These are:

- that the OU will need to go deeper into the local communities and work collaboratively with others;
- that the OU regional network is a unique resource which may have a contribution to make in the context of continuing education;
- that advances in communication technology such as tele-conferencing networks may have a significant role to play in future developments in continuing education.

How are these services to be financed? By grants, by student fees, or by various combinations of both methods? But whatever the means, the ends seem to attract approbation. ACACE records that 'the efficiency of modern distance learning systems is now sufficiently well proven to warrant substantial investment in them' and 'distance learning, often including individualised learning, is well suited to the needs of many adults'.[2]

4.3 Polytechnics

In 1976 a questionnaire was distributed to 30 polytechnics and Ulster College, the Polytechnic of Northern Ireland. The main purpose was to discover the present provision of continuing education in the polytechnics.

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1. Smith, R., 'The next ten years; the Open University's work in continuing education', in Teaching at a Distance, No. 17, Spring 1980.

2. ACACE, Continuing Education; from Policies to Practice, para 8.16, Leicester, ACACE, 1982.

Out of the 31 institutions approached, 14 did not reply, 4 gave a nil return, 4 reported no designated courses but completed the questionnaire, and 9 said that they had designated courses and also completed the questionnaire. A further 37 institutions were approached, half of them in the Northwest of England. These were selected arbitrarily but included colleges of further education and universities.

Only 11 of the 68 institutions approached said that they ran courses designated as continuing education. Many of the replies indicated that either the institution had not arrived at a definition of continuing education or were unable to provide figures until the term was defined for them.

Thus, though within the institutions contacted there appeared to be a significant amount of work which could be classified as continuing education, few of them had formalised their pattern of provision. Consequently the funding of continuing education seldom followed a clear pattern 'with the exception of those institutions which had established centres'.

Fees for short work-related courses seemed to be at the level necessary for financial self-support. The fee structure for longer and for non-work related courses seemed to be extremely diverse.

Up to 1976 'there had not been widespread innovation. Predominantly, the provision of continuing education appeared to be ad hoc, finding its manpower resources and funds within the existing structure of each institution. Much seemed to depend on the availability of teaching staff within departments or their equivalents'.

Generally, the polytechnic response in continuing education was to local industry, consisting of broadening and updating courses in science and technology and also in management. 'Regional Management Centres attached to polytechnics, because of their special terms of reference, have an almost exclusive commitment to what is seen as continuing education. Certain in-service teacher training, Dip.HE and degree courses are designed with the adult re-entrant in mind'.[1] It was interesting to find that a high proportion of the courses cited by respondents as falling within the definition of continuing education were retraining and updating courses of post-experience, post-qualification types.

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1. Hallam, A., Continuing Education, Report prepared for the Academic Board Working Party, Preston Polytechnic, unpublished, 1977.

Generally, funding for adult re-entrant courses came from within the initiating department's allocation. Short courses of all types tended to be self-financing in some institutions, in others some were not so but the general tendency was towards all short courses being self-financing. Financial pressures could well mean that independent students seeking a career change will be unable to meet the rising costs of fees and that the amount of continuing education in polytechnics may continue to be marginal.

4.4 Local education authorities

Local authorities receive their income from three sources; rates, grants and charges. In 1975/76, of a relevant expenditure of £10 million, 34% was raised from rates and 66% from grants. In 1981/82 the rates provided 44%, grants 56%, of a relevant expenditure of £22 million. (Figures rounded to nearest whole number). Most of education expenditure falls into 'relevant expenditure'. The aggregate exchequer grant to local authorities is the product of total relevant expenditure and the grant percentage; £11,073 million in 1981/82. [1]

Authorities in England and Wales receive an allocation determined by their total expenditure in relation to a government-set figure of what they ought to be spending and by the size of their rateable services. This is the GRE, or grant related expenditure. If an authority decides to spend more than 10% (on average) above its GRE, the rate payers have to pay more towards each £ of spending; that is a grant related poundage. Thus the relationship between the GRE and what an authority actually decides to spend determines its GRP. The system is a complicated one, using various multipliers and weightings in the calculations of GRE and GRP. These calculations and the implementation of various instruments of policy such as 'hold back' procedures enable the central government to exercise considerable influence on local authority expenditure. Increases in expenditure beyond levels supported by central government grants simply mean an increase in local rates - taxes levied on property, industrial and domestic, within the locality. The whole area of local government finance has undergone a succession of changes in the period 1980-82, and there is no doubt that pressures on local ratepayers, both industrial and domestic, will lead to further changes. [2] Local authorities, faced with financial

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1. See Education Digest, Vol. 159, No. 7, 12.2.82.
2. 'Finance', an Education Digest, in Education, 12.2.82, Longmans, Harlow, 1982.

constraints, have first to meet expenditures required by various Acts of Parliament, such as the provision of schools for children. Second, they determine how to distribute the rest of the monies available to them amongst the services which they wish to provide. Unfortunately, most of the provision of adult and continuing education is assumed to be in this second category and thus there has been increasing pressure to find income from charges or fees from students rather than from rates or grants to sustain this service.

The central economic feature of the organisation of local authority supported adult education is that students may contribute to the cost of the service they receive in three ways, through the taxation system (income tax and value added taxes) to central government, rates to the local authorities and by a class fee meeting part or all of the cost of their particular course. The organisation of local authority provision reflects in some measure this trinity of financial resources, in that each institution within the local authority balances the moral duty to provide a public service and the abilities of students to contribute through fees.[1] The issue of fees is fundamental to much of the argument about the adequacy of provision. Mee and Wiltshire demonstrated the association between rises in fees from 1975/76 to 1976/77 and student numbers.

Percentage rise in fees - 1975/6 to 1976/7 -	Average percentage fall in student numbers
33⅓ and under	4.8
40 - 75	13.2
150	19.8
200	49.6
500	71.1

Fee increases usually take place when financial constraints are being imposed by central government and when there is a tendency towards recession. There are thus many factors to take into account such as a decline in advertising expenditure, cuts in staffing, local recessions and so on. 'But the presumption that fee increases are important among these seems a reasonable one and one that is supported by the evidence. Perhaps the most significant thing is not the obviously catastrophic

1. Russell Report, Adult Education; a Plan for Development, HMSO, 1973, stated a preference for 'student contributions' rather than fees.

effect of the few very large fee increases but the difference in effect of increases of up to 33⅓% and those of 40 - 75%'. [1] Unfortunately, the increase in the costs of tuition to students are not measurable in fee charges alone. Fee increases may be exacerbated by:

- reductions in the length of courses;
- reductions in the length of class meetings;
- increases in the size of classes so that the amount of personal tuition is reduced;
- increased demands for full payments in advance of courses (loss of interest on savings);
- reductions in groups qualifying for concessionary rates.

Some of the above can be dealt with by expressing student contributions on an hourly basis, but even this measure is a rough one.

The 1980 figures, based on returns from 71 local education authorities, indicated an 11% decrease in enrolments compared with 1979. [2] Figures supplied in 1982 suggested that the decline in enrolment was very little, but of course if the decline continued at 10% per annum there would be no adult education service left, and as Mee and Wiltshire have pointed out this decline in the number of students has to be seen against a background in which growth was the norm. [3] Indeed, in one Borough, between 1958 and 1967 student enrolments increased from 1,400 to 6,300 and the percentage of the adult population attending evening institutes rose from 2.27% in 1960 to 3.8% in 1964, and to 6.55% in 1967. [4,5,6] This increase was in the researcher's opinion largely due to the appointment of the first full-time organiser for further education and the youth service in 1963

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1. Mee, G. and Wiltshire, H., 1978.

2. NIAE/ACACE survey of fees charged by local authorities for adult education courses in October/November 1981.

3. Mee, G. and Wiltshire, H., 1978.

4. Wood-Allum, A Review of the Development of the Education Service in the Borough of Chesterfield, 1944-67, M.Ed. thesis, University of Durham, 1969, unpublished.

5. See also Fairbairn, A.N., 'The financing of community colleges', in Adult Education, Vol. 43, No. 1, May 1970.

6. See also Wiltshire, H. and Percy, K., Fee Structure in LEA Adult Education, NIAE and Department of Adult Education, University of Nottingham, 1967.

but the period was one of fairly stable levels of student contributions. The need for local coordination, be it through a full-time organiser or through a local development council, has been made by Morgan (1975) after a survey in Herefordshire. Coordination of resources could affect the recruitment of students, but it is difficult to quantify such variables.[1] It is of course dangerous to take too long a period for comparison, as the Local Government Act of 1972 led to some major reconstructions. For example, the population of the new Northumberland County local education authority was nearly halved yet the number of advisers was reduced from four to three so that the administrative/education support service was considerably strengthened.[2]

So far we have dealt with average student contribution increases. These figures are useful and indicative, but from the point of view of policy making severely inadequate, for:

- some local education authorities, through a combination of careful planning, good publicity and by providing a rich variety of courses, had increased enrolments between 1974 and 1980 (e.g. Buckinghamshire);
- even where students continued to enrol in even greater numbers despite increased fees, the type of activity was changing; recreational classes increased but adult basic education and lipreading for the deaf classes ceased.[3]

Clearly, if priority groups are selected, then the student contribution element has to be controlled to attain this objective. What economic or educational policy decision, for example, led to 26% of 89 responding authorities charging the full non-vocational fee to physically handicapped students in 1981, compared to 10% of 87 respondents in 1980? Another example from a survey, Bude, Camelford and Wadebridge Centre, Devon, apparently stopped their 25p. per hour class concessions to pensioners and the unemployed and lost all pensioners from classes. Similarly, in North Bristol, some classes attended largely by retired people closed, as those receiving any kind of occupational pension now

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1. Morgan, M.M., Adult Education Strategy and Organisation in Herefordshire, M.Sc. thesis, University of Bath, 1975, unpublished.

2. Brown, J.F. and Galleymore, D.C., 'Adult education and local government reorganisation; the effects of change in three local education authorities', in Studies in Adult Education, Vol. 8, No. 1, April, 1976.

3. Delahunt, D., Secretary of the Educational Centres Association, reported in Education, 15th February 1980.

had to pay full fees. [1] Yet it has been suggested by gerontologists that keeping older people mentally active is likely to reduce the period in which they occupy institutions. [2]

The problems of local education authorities' charges to students are compounded by the practices of 'free trade'. This the Russell Report describes as 'an agreement between neighbouring authorities on the administration of extra-district students' (para 313). 'In 1974 most LEAs agreed that where a student enrols in another authority a payment based upon agreed "recoupment" rates (36 hours x 46p and 62 hours x 49p respectively for non-vocational and vocational classes at 1973 prices) was made by the home authority to the providing one, irrespective of whether the classes were conducted at "vocational" or "non-vocational" establishments'. [3] This would mean, for example, that if 8,460 local residents attended classes in other areas, the cost to the home authority would be £144,484 at 71/72 prices. This practice raises the question as to whether it would be better for a local authority to expand its service to reduce 'free trade' or whether the free trade system is the best economic method of proceeding. In the view of Jackson (1974) there was not sufficient evidence from research to present a convincing case either way. [4] However, ACACE produced a report in 1980. [5,6] At that time the fee recoupment system in vocational further education was monitored through the Regional Advisory Council system (with alternative monitoring arrangements in the North and Northwest of England) and the Inter-Authority Fee Recoupment Committee of the Local Authority Associations. There was no such systematic arrangement for non-vocational adult education so that little information was available, not even on the total size of the recoupment payments. Enquiries in 1978/79 to ten Regional Advisory Councils suggested that:

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1. NIAE/ACACE, Survey of Fees, 1982, page 3.
2. 'Adult education; intolerable strains', results of a survey by NATFHE, in NATFHE Journal, December 1981, p.9.
3. Russell Report: Adult Education: a Plan for Development, London, HMSO, 1973.
4. Jackson, T., 'Free trade is big business', in Adult Education, Vol.47, No. 3, September 1974.
5. ACACE, Report on Inter-Authority Free Trade and Fee Recoupment Arrangements for Non-Vocational Adult Education, ACACE Pamphlet, January 1980.
6. Taylor, J. and Warburton, M., 'Local authority free trade in adult education', in Studies in Adult Education, Vol.12, No. 1, April 1980.

- 42 local education authorities accepted free trade and fee recoupments;
- 36 local education authorities applied various restrictions;
- 22 local education authorities did not accept free trade and fee recoupment;
- 4 local education authorities supplied no information.

Of the 42 authorities in the first category, 21 were in the Greater London Area where there was a statutory requirement to maintain free trade arrangements. Where there were restrictions, such as requiring a permit as evidence of prior permission, the effect of such arrangements was unclear. The impression given by the ACACE report is that, under continuing financial pressure through the operation of the RSG system described above, more authorities have withdrawn from, or restricted further free trade arrangements. This has resulted in:

- a reduced choice of subsidised courses for students who are now restricted to a geographical area;
- a threat to 'group' provision, such as that provided by the Pre-Retirement Association to students from many geographical areas;
- a decline in student numbers in inner city colleges and centres whose specialist provision assumed a wide geographic catchment area;
- a decline in the rationalisation of adult education provision within and amongst authorities;
- reduced opportunities for study within a student's area because of the closure of classes that were based on numbers being made up from 'outside' and
- reduced opportunities for students outside their area because of the high fees being charged to non-residents.

Of equal consequence to the effects described above is the allegation that the removal of outside students does not lead to any reduction of cost to an authority but simply to a loss of income.[1] But though there seems little case for the exclusion of outside students by any particular authority, there remains the problem of an authority dealing with a 'balance of payments' deficit and it can be argued that substantial payments to a city could restrict provision in an outlying county.

The present local education authority practice of multiple pricing has been accepted by ACACE as a pragmatic response to present financial

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1. Hall, R.B., 'Financial aspects of differential fees', in Adult Education, Vol. 53, No. 5, January 1981.

restraints, though the Council suggests that 'much more attention should be paid to establishing principles about who should pay for what at what, if any, proportion of the costs of provision'.[1]

But in the meanwhile, as we have shown above, not enough is known about the effects and incidence of the finance of adult education to ensure that agreed priorities are attained. In fact, a system of self-financing units is emerging which could result in an adult education service which ignores certain social priorities. For example, it has been argued that about 10 to 12 million people, about 20% of the population of the United Kingdom, are above retiring age or have taken early retirement. Long, in 1981, quoted from a sample of just over 200 doctors of whom just over 50 were recorded as having advised patients to join an adult education class, presumably as a form of therapy. Without adult education provision, a doctor may fall back on prescribing anti-depressants, one of which costs more than £60 per annum per patient. If 2 of a class of 20 seek help from their general practitioners, the saving of closing down through a refusal to subsidise the class is lost.[2] Many of those referred to by Long are retired people who suffer bereavement and loneliness; the adult class is a positive and healthy activity in these circumstances. Suppose that only one half of the retired attend adult education activities, and suppose thereby each is kept active enough to put back the need for institutional accommodation for one week. At present prices that would save £360 million per year. We would have thought that such possible savings would have been researched, for it may well be that local authority adult education provision is far more cost effective than many suspect.

LEA provision usually is through five major groups of institutions, listed in Mee and Wiltshire as:

- Sp (Specialised)
- FE (Colleges of Further Education)
- Comm (Community Schools and Colleges)
- AY (Adult plus Youth)
- L (Leisure)

These are highly generalised descriptions of tendencies; there is a wide range of variance within each group. In Group Sp, adult education is

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1. ACACE, 'Continuing Education; from Policies to Practice' (para. 9.28), Leicester, ACACE, 1982.
2. Long, B., 'Dressmaking is better than drug-taking', in Education, Vol. 158, No. 2, July 1981.

conceived as a distinguishable and separate sector of education needing to develop its own organisation and institutions as capable of doing so. There are four sub-types:

- full-time staff including teachers and other specialists; own teaching accommodation; large institutions mainly in cities and urban areas;
- some full-time staff (usually one); borrowed teaching accommodation; mainly in towns;
- mainly spare-time staff; borrowed teaching accommodation; small urban institutions;
- almost wholly spare-time staff; borrowed teaching accommodation; generally small rural areas.

In Group 2, adult education is conceived as part of FE. Adult education has to compete for funds with other departments. The strong FE departmental tradition of independence often protects its autonomy and its financial viability.

In the Community Group 3 adult education is conceived, along with the youth service, as one of the functions of the school which has a commitment to continuing education. Further and higher education cannot usually take place. The adult educator holds a part-time, joint appointment, and control of policy rests with the principal or headmaster/mistress. Some are longer established; small medium sized rural and suburban institutions with part-time staff and shared teaching accommodation; others, the more recently established, are large multi-purpose institutions with relatively small adult education programmes in inner city or rehousing areas with part-time staff and shared accommodation. The fourth group, AY, conceives adult education as a specialised and dispersed sector of education which may best be developed jointly with a similar specialised and dispersed sector such as the youth service. In urban areas they have some full-time staff but depend largely on part-time staff, borrowed or shared premises, and are medium sized institutions. There are smaller institutions in urban areas with no full-time staff. The fifth group, L, Leisure, treats adult education as a leisure activity and comes under the purview of the Recreation and Leisure Services Committee or the like. This is a recent development whose implications have not yet become apparent.

Mee and Wiltshire analysed the courses provided under the following headings:

- Craft and aesthetic skills courses
- related to personal care and household economy
- related to leisure time enjoyment and personal development;

- Physical skills
  - related to the maintenance of health and fitness
  - related to leisure time enjoyment and personal development;
- Intellectual and cognitive skills
  - such as language courses;
- Courses addressed to disadvantaged groups.

53% of courses provided by LEAs were in the Craft and aesthetic skills group, 24% in Physical skills, 18% in Intellectual and cognitive skills, and 5% in courses addressed to the disadvantaged.

The figures Mee and Wiltshire produce suggest that the large Specialised units and Colleges of Further Education were the major providers of courses for disadvantaged groups and Community Schools and Colleges were the major promoters of self-governing and independent groups. Evidence from their interviews supported a contention that the Specialised institution with its own premises (Sp I) was the most innovative and development oriented environment. Further Education departments of adult education also displayed a high capacity for innovation, but Specialised institutions with their own day-time capacity had the edge in this respect. They also found that the most innovative institutions had supportive principals.[1]

It could be argued that Mee and Wiltshire have suggested that supportive principals and staff qualified in the mores of adult education tend to be in Specialised institutions which can deploy their accommodation to meet the demands of their students. It may well be that other types of provision may develop, as staff training improves and becomes more universal, to reach the educational standards presently discernible in the Specialised institutions. So far as economics and organisation are concerned, they point to an under-financed, under-staffed service in which no specific pattern of provision may yet be identified as being clearly the most cost-effective.

4.5 The voluntary bodies

There is little research available about the economics and organisation of voluntary bodies. The general view is that volunteers cost very little and are a welcome incremental resource. However, some allegations have been made that certain voluntary body activities duplicate the work of other voluntary bodies or of other providers. For example, that part of the Workers' Educational Association activity which is closely linked to

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1. Mee, G. and Wiltshire, H., 1978.

the activities of university extra-mural departments has been questioned and criticised. [1] Barratt-Brown pointed out there was little research available to justify these criticisms [2] but the salary paid to a university staff member was, on average, about twice that paid to a WEA tutor.

In the financial year ending March 1980, grant-aid of £1.4 million was made available by the Department of Education and Science and the Department of Employment towards expenditure incurred by the Trades Union Congress. A further £1.7 million was accepted for the year commencing April 1, 1980. [3] These public funds are augmented by the subscriptions of trade union members.

Given the numbers in trade unions and the importance of trade unions in a democratic society, these funds are remarkably small and may be understood as 'pump-priming' figures. There is no research on this subject that we may quote, but experience from Australia suggests that the statutory provision, coordination and promotion of union training may lead to the undermining of trade union independence and voluntarism. [4]

Another major voluntary body is the Women's Institute movement. The National Federation of Women's Institutes recognises the value of local education authority permanent staff as enablers and as a support to the efforts of the voluntary sector. At the same time, the Women's Institutes need a certain amount of financial support to release the voluntary resources. As Baroness Young, Minister of State at the Department of Education and Science, put it, 'I would ask them (the local authorities) to bear in mind that what is a tiny part of their budget may be crucial to the voluntary body and may be one of the most cost effective uses of the local authorities' resources'. [5]

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1. Shaw, R., 'Universities and the WEA: myths and reality', in Adult Education, Vol. 44, No. 1, May 1971.

2. Barratt-Brown, M., 'In defence of the WEA', in Adult Education, Vol. 44, No. 3, September 1971.

3. TUC General Council: General Council's Report to the 112th Annual TUC Congress, September 1st-5th, 1980, paras. 221-233.

4. Cupper, L., 'Public funded trade union education in Australia', in Industrial Relations Journal, Vol. 11, No. 1, March/April 1980.

5. NFWI, The Developing Partnership in Adult Education, conference organised by WI at Denman College, Oxfordshire, 25th-27th April 1980.

The Minister's statement ably encapsulates the economic and financial organisation of all voluntary movements. They are acknowledged by common consent to be a cost-effective means of using resources. But we cannot find independent research to support or deny this view.

But within voluntary bodies, there is some evidence for making generalisations from a sample of over fifty organisations in the United States,[1] namely that:

- new groups need assistance in establishing basic management systems and in learning about successful programmes and ideas;[2]
- older groups have problems associated with their transition to permanence, particularly the continued delivery of services and the maintenance of adequate staffing patterns;
- mature organisations have to find solutions to changing priorities and often have to re-establish rapport with clients.

We suggest that there is little research available to be able to say how adequate is the provision of finance to our voluntary bodies and associations. The evidence suggests that under-funding may be more often the cause of inefficiency than any other single cause.[3,4]

4.6 Directed private study and distance education and open learning systems

A study of the costings of day release, evening class and directed private study has been published which refers to conditions in 1975. Part-time day-release was taken to be 432 hours of face-to-face tuition, evening class tuition or an equivalent course lasting two years (three hours on each of two evenings per week for thirty-one weeks in each of the two years) was assumed to give a total of 372 hours. Directed private study consisted of 72 hours over two weeks of block release, 15 hours equivalence to teaching hours (twenty months study by correspondence, sixty written tests, each four tests being the equivalent of one teaching hour) and a

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1. Queisser, T.D., Management Needs and Resources among Volunteer Organisations with Education as a Primary Mission, Ph.D., Northwestern University, 1978 (unpublished).
2. See also Ponquinette, C.W., A Comparison of Structures and Procedures in Three Adult Education Institutions; Implications for Training, Ph.D. thesis, University of Michigan, 1981.
3. Volunteers and Continuing Education; a Response to the ACACE Discussion Paper 'Present Imperfect', The Volunteer Centre, July 1980.
4. WEA Working Party on Structure, Organisation, Finance and Staffing, 1966, para. 267, WEA, London, 1966.

final 180 hours over a period of six weeks on block release.

The net cost per student over two years was estimated as

- Day release £368.16
- Evening study £319.36
- Directed private study £247.26

As a measure of effectiveness, the researchers took the numbers passing the examination as a percentage of the number enrolled. These were:

- Day release 47%
- Evening study 24%
- Directed private study 49%

The conclusion was that with older persons, schemes of directed private study may ensure a more effective utilisation of resources. [1] New types of courses have been developed overseas combining a period of residence with independent study such as that in Mathematics at Moscow University, Management at the Institute of Management at Kolodje, Czechoslovakia. Other variations have also been tried in ventures by the Japan State Broadcasting Corporation and the University of Wisconsin. [2]

The Open University concept has been extended to other parts of the world; for example, at Athabasca (Alberta) and Télé-Université (Quebec). [3] These are alleged to have been a success but the institution of an open university requires a high level of initial capital investment. Apparently the developed countries can find the necessary capital but in Latin-America these resources are not available and projects such as the distance university in Colombia have been postponed. [4]

So far as open learning systems are concerned, a paper produced by Coombe Lodge shows that the costs of providing open learning systems by

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1. Jones, L. and Wylie, A., 'Methods of study: a cost comparison', in Education and Training, March 1975, pp. 52 and 53.

2. Jones, L., 'Directed private study', in Industrial Training International, Vol. 2, No. 8, August 1967.

3. Daniel, J.S. and Smith, W.A.S., 'Opening open universities; the Canadian experience', in the Canadian Journal of Higher Education, Vol. 9, No. 2.

4. Escotet, M.A., 'Adverse factors in the development of an Open University', in Programmed Learning and Educational Technology, Vol. 17, No. 4, November 1980.

Colleges of Further Education do not exceed the costs of providing normal in-house courses. [1]

4.7 Private agencies

Few private agencies seem to deal with less than seventy students per week. In 1972 about five and a half thousand students attended one London secretarial centre and it was estimated that the annual turnover of the English Language Schools was over £3 million. Rogers (1974) investigated the reasons for students using the private sector. These were that:

- private sector advertising was more attractive and more skilfully presented;
- private sector premises were more attractive and often, compared to the public sector, luxurious;
- private sector provision was more flexible than state provision and often used a 'systems' approach;
- training of tutors in the private sector was concentrated into two weeks' on-the-job observation;
- the private sector plugged the gaps in state provision; as this sector was not accountable in the public sector sense, opportunities could be taken speedily.

On the other hand, fees in the private sector were very high and courses were often narrowly focussed. The state system had to provide a wide range of courses for the adult population as a whole and to cater for the less wealthy. [2]

A study by Williams and Woodhall [3,4] undertaken in 1975 reported that:

- many facts and figures about the private sector were not ascertainable, so much of the evidence indicated that further research is needed;
- the highest proportion of the private sector student population was female and concerned with correspondence education;

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1. Birch, D.W., Open Learning Systems in Further Education - Some Aspects of Resource Management, Coombe Lodge, Information Book No. 1717, March 1982.
2. Rogers, J., 'The private operators', in New Society, 6th June 1974.
3. Williams, G., Woodhall, M. and March, M., 'Independent Further Education', in Higher Education Bulletin, Vol. 6, No. 1, 1977.
4. Williams, F., Woodnall, M., Independent Further Education, Policy Studies Institute, 1979.

- student numbers, apart from correspondence course students, were probably between 100,000 and 130,000;
- most staff were part-time and salaries were low;
- about one quarter of the schools were 'recognised as efficient' by the Department of Education and Science, but lack of recognition was 'not necessarily meaningful in this context';
- the vast majority entered their students for nationally recognised examinations; their curricula tended to be narrow but could be changed comparatively easily;
- student amenities were usually in short supply;
- classes were small and many schools claimed that their students received personal attention;
- finance was usually a problem and there was a fairly high death rate among such schools.

4.8 Residential education

The first long-term residential colleges were established between 1899 and 1919 and more have been added since then. Since 1945 a number of short-term colleges were established and by 1954 twenty-four were operational. After 1945 the long-term colleges became far more dependent on direct state financial support and consequently gained a financial stability and potential for growth hitherto lacking. Most short-term colleges similarly depend on local authority support as a base for their financial viability. Studies of residential colleges have concentrated on the educational benefits which students gain from residential study. [1,2,3] Their financial basis has been rarely investigated but it has been suggested that those responsible for the allocation of resources to them have not ensured that the accommodation has been improved to the standards currently expected or that the wardens and staff have the flexibility to mount programmes in response to current issues. [4]

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1. Speak, L., Residential Adult Education in England, M.A. thesis, University of Leeds, 1949.

2. Hughes, A.M., Some Problems of the Short-term Adult Residential College in Post-war Britain, M.A. thesis, University of Liverpool, 1954.

3. Blumler, J., The Effect of Long-term Residential Adult Education in Post-war Britain, with particular reference to Ruskin College, Oxford, D.Phil.thesis, University of Oxford, 1962.

4. Rowe, K., The Development and Changing Roles of the Adult Residential Colleges in Britain, M.A.(Ed.) thesis, University of Keele, 1970.

4.9 Provision for the disadvantaged

The financial dimension of educational policies to assist disadvantaged adults has been curiously neglected and arrangements are essentially ad hoc. It has been argued that many detailed questions can only be answered with knowledge of policy goals, financial structures and socio-economic conditions of each country, such as:

- What is the present distribution of benefits from education among the adult population?
- What is the pattern of private demand for adult education at prevailing prices?
- What is the preferred pattern, and by what revisions of financial arrangements might this be achieved?
- What would be the likely consequences of such a revision for economic growth, for the life-time consumption profiles of the people and for the social fabric?
- What proportions of finance for adult education now come from, and in future should come from government, corporate, and private sources?
- What criteria should determine the distribution of this financial burden?

Questions like these point to the kinds of data which are needed to make judgments about policy options and particularly to sustain a policy which will necessarily shift resources from one group of adults to another.

There are obviously costs in compensatory educational policies for the disadvantaged, but there are also benefits. For example, an adult literacy programme could well produce significant offsetting reductions in public expenditure and avoid some misemployment of resources.

How the money is spent is as important as how much is spent and to achieve the maximum effect, educational policies should take into account the following propositions:

- programmes should aim to do only what education is likely to achieve, avoiding objectives like income redistribution which education cannot directly influence;
- a concentration on work related skills will not significantly promote economic growth but will hinder the achievement of the wider objectives of adult education;
- programmes must be prepared to pioneer content and methods outside the norm for the formal education system and for much existing provision for adults. Educational disadvantage is sometimes a matter

of genetic inheritance or of personality but it is often a function of the legal and institutional framework of education and these barriers need to be broken down to assist disadvantaged groups;

- programmes for the disadvantaged have to be specific and highly discriminate, with a well-defined clientele and particular objectives. For example, the Open University has also been used by a distinctly less disadvantaged class of adults than intended. Many students have already enjoyed a substantial amount of higher education. The problem is to minimise such a leakage and misdirection of resources;
- programmes have to be supported by appropriate fiscal policies and appropriate social policies in areas like employment, housing and health. Some disadvantage may be due to a lack of competency, but other disadvantages are social.

These principles suggest that one important road to cost-effectiveness in public spending is the better coordination of spending by potentially reinforcing, but often counteracting branches of social policy. The effectiveness of each programme may be raised not by more funds but by improved coordination of policies. [1]

All the above seems to imply that the Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit qualifies as an example of cost-effective financial practice. [2]

4.10. Information from outside the United Kingdom

Though in comparative education one can never be sure that one is comparing like with like there is a strong case for considering the Swedish adult education system. Three facts stand out:

- one third of the Swedish population regularly participate in adult education;
- adult education expenditure is at least seven times higher than in Britain;
- adult education is part of the Swedish way of life.

From the earliest days adult education in Sweden was inseparable from widely supported political and social movements; from 1932 adult education

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1. Drake, L., 'The Financial Implications', Chapter VII in OECD: Widening Access for the Disadvantaged - Learning Opportunities for Adults V, OECD, 1981.

2. See also Anderson, R., The Cost and Financing of Adult Education and Training, Report, Institute of Higher Education, Teachers' College, Columbia University, 1982.

has attracted the support of political parties of all shades who have continued to offer the financial support to develop a system of adult education. But in spite of all this effort, in 1974 it was discovered that in the majority group - Swedes with less than nine years education - only one sixth use the adult education system. To rectify this, a five-year experiment created 'study organisers' to proselytize adult education in the workplace and on the doorstep. Early successes have, however, been followed by less sanguine assessments of the programme.[1,2] It seems, therefore, that spending some 4% to 5% of the educational budget on adult education does not lead to the recruitment of those whose educational experience is the most limited. This is not to say that there is no argument for increasing the comparable British figure from 0.5%. On the contrary, 3% to 4% of the Swedish educational budget can potentially involve 60% of the adult population in study circles. It appears, therefore, that there is a basic level of expenditure needed to sustain a mass adult education movement such as the study circle system, and certain directed basic levels of expenditure to ensure the education of specific groups and that the British level of expenditure is too low to attain any degree of the success discernible in Sweden.

Because of the increasing proportion of retired citizens in Britain and because of the present controversy about the effects of fee reduction policies on the enrolment of older people, we inspected research on the subject in the United States. The state of knowledge concerning tuition waiver policies and legislation in the United States is tentative and incomplete and in Long and Rossing's opinion further research was needed.[3,4] However, in 1979, Boshier and Baker randomly assigned 59 adult education courses to a fee and non-fee condition to establish the extent to which fee and non-fee courses attracted different clientele. 721 participants

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1. Jones, W.D.A., Swedish Adult Education; Political, Social and Economic Perspectives, Manchester University Press, 1982 (provisional title).

2. Jones, W.D.A., Adult Education in Nordic Countries; a Political and Social Analysis, Final Report to SSRC (HR 6021/2), 1980.

3. Long, H.B. and Rossing, B.E., 'Tuition waiver plans for older Americans in post-secondary public education institutions', in Educational Gerontology, Vol. 4, No. 2, April/June 1979.

4. See also: Chelsvig, K.A. and Timmermann, S., 'Tuition policies of higher educational institutions and state government and the older learner', in Educational Gerontology, Vol. 4, No. 2, April-June 1979.

completed an Education Participation Scale and a questionnaire eliciting social and demographic data. Nearly 70% of the participants enrolled in the non-fee courses. They appeared to be motivated by EPS factors, cognitive interest and 'escape stimulation'. The researchers concluded that in the United States the mere removal of fees from leisure-centred adult education courses does not result in the attraction of participants who are significantly different from the middle-class participants traditionally attracted to such courses. Again, this area needs to be more thoroughly researched.[1]

4.11 The broadcasting organisations

The BBC obtains its finance from licence fees. Its expenditure in 1979/80 on adult and continuing education, allowing for local radio and capital costs, was of the order of about £9 million, which was about 2.5% of its total expenditure. Adult and continuing education is, in this case, defined as those broadcasts which are specifically accepted as such by the BBC education staff and the Continuing Education Advisory Council. The definition does not include broadcasts which may be educational in the sense of providing knowledge or information or arguments that could well be used by other providers as a basis for an educational course. The figures do not include expenditure on Open University broadcasts as this is borne by the OU.

The independent companies raise their finances from advertising revenues. On a pro-rata hourly broadcasting basis there is no reason to believe that the independent companies spend less on adult education than does the BBC. The inauguration of Channel 4 will treble the independent broadcasting companies' educational output. Adult and continuing education is expected to account for about 15% of Channel 4's total budget.

It is worth noting that the broadcasting organisations between them provide hundreds of hours of educational programmes for adults. Further, as their total budgets are large the percentage figures of the costs of programmes devoted to adult and continuing education do not fully acknowledge their contribution to total adult education in the United Kingdom. The total broadcasting resources will be, with Channel 4, roughly equivalent to about 25% of total amount of cost allocated by local and central

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1. Boshier, R. and Baker, G., 'Effects of fees on clientele characteristics and participation in adult education', in Adult Education, (USA), Vol. 29, No. 3, Spring 1979.

government to all adult education for 1982/83.[1] It is still possible to argue that this major resource - as an integral part of the adult education service - is both under-researched and under-utilised by other adult education organisations.

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1. White Paper, Cmd. 8494

5.0 EFFECTS OF FINANCIAL POLICIES

Because of lack of funds for research and development, growth often varies according to the availability and influence of other sectors of local educational provision rather than to any systematic survey of demand for adult education. Thus, there are departments of adult studies in further education colleges, community colleges and schools, adult and youth centres, and some full-time adult centres either fortunate enough to acquire a redundant school or an independent foundation, or using a host of secondary schools in the evening. These often carry the public images of their previous states - the 'night school'. The diversity is obviously well-known. What is not always so well known is the conglomeration of activities of subject and geographical proximity varyingly funded from the LEA through an adult education centre, through voluntary agencies such as the Women's Institutes, the Townswomen's Guilds, or through closed institutions such as hospitals, or even through private groups appealing independently to the LEAs. Similar courses which exist side by side often do so in ignorance of each other's existence. '..... the recent increase in the appointments of full-time staff has resulted in some local coordination of this mass of separately funded courses ..... but coordination of existing provision is not enough to establish the value of adult education ..... there should be some identifiable information service'. [1,2] But this call for increased expenditure in 1979 was overtaken by events, for in 1980 ACACE reported the effects of current restrictions on expenditure. [3] In 1982, a major report, Continuing Education, from Policies to Practice, issued by ACACE, devoted the whole of Chapter 10 to the matter of finance and stated that 'The urgent question is whether the present methods of financing learners will remain appropriate to changing economic and social priorities and will sufficiently enable the wider access of adults to education over the next twenty years'. [4]

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1. Group Report: 'Structure, organisation and resources', in New Directions, Adult Education in the Context of Continuing Education, DES Short Course Programme, Gypsy Hill, January 1979, available NIAE.
2. ACACE, Links to Learning, ACACE, 1979.
3. ACACE, Present Imperfect, Discussion Paper, ACACE, 1980.
4. ACACE, Continuing Education; from Policies to Practice, ACACE, 1982.

So little information is available to effect an economic analysis of the adult education service, that we may only hazard some hypotheses, based on the foregoing evidence. These are that:

- the effectiveness of the adult education service, both local government and voluntary provision, has been diminished not because of too much money being spent or because of wastefulness, but rather that not enough financial resources have been allocated to enable the service to maximise its efficiency;
- given tight management and the use of modern technology, open learning systems do not cost more than conventional face-to-face class methods; [1,2]
- not enough is available to spend on aggressive advertising;
- not enough is available for the provision of continuing research and information;
- rises in fees lead to a decrease in students, ceteris paribus, and lead to classes not reaching the most cost effective numbers. [3] There is some evidence that rises in fees actually have reduced the total income from this source available to local education authorities. [4]

'..... You may, however, find my preliminary thoughts useful, since they are based upon a fairly detailed analysis over the last four years in an Authority sufficiently large and varied in its population to provide a reasonable sample.

Discussion about the effect of fee levels on enrolments has been very greatly confused in many authorities by the introduction of a wide range of measures designed to protect the service from the effects of financial pressures on authorities. As a result, there are few authorities where it is possible to isolate fee changes as the only possible factor affecting enrolment levels.

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1. Davies, J.S. and Stroud, M., 'Distance teaching: a reassessment for the 1980's', in Distance Education, Vol. 2, No. 2, 1981.
2. Snowden, B.L. and Daniel, J.S., 'The economics and management of small post-secondary distance education systems', in Distance Education, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1980.
3. Horobin, J., 'Adult education in Scotland from 1968 to 1978', in Scottish Journal of Adult Education, Vol. 4, No. 4, 1980.
4. S. McNair, letter to authors dated 12th May 1982.

While all these factors undoubtedly have some impact on enrolment levels, I believe that it is now clear from my own research that by far the most significant factor affecting enrolment is the level of fee, and that the other measures taken in most authorities have only marginal, if any, effect.

The reason that this has not been evident before stems from a failure to analyse carefully the effect of inflation on expenditure and income. All local authority accounting is undertaken on a cash basis and it is necessary to make allowance for this before attempting to relate changes in enrolment patterns to fee levels. At this stage I believe that it is fairly clear from my own work that there is a direct relationship between real fee levels and enrolments which is masked by inflation.

I am fortunate in being able to study a large authority with very varied population, social and employment structure and with a wide range of different institutions providing adult education. I am also fortunate that the authority has not changed the standard length of an adult education course, nor methods of payment, significantly for four years. In 1978/79 it charged the same fees to examination and non-examination students but for various reasons examination fees have been frozen in cash terms while non-examination fees have risen steeply. The result is, that over a four year period, real fees for one group of adults have fallen while real fees for another in the same institutions and the same authority have risen. Thus the relationship between enrolment and fee level can be plotted on a graph from seven separate points drawn over a four year period. In fact, enrolments have risen steadily amongst examination students and fallen steadily amongst non-examination students during this period.

My preliminary observations are that the graph which results from plotting these seven points is a remarkably clear and classic demand curve, suggesting a very close and direct relationship between real fee levels and enrolments. From this it is possible to identify the real fee which should be charged if income from the service were to be maximised. In November 1981 prices this fee would appear to be 69p per hour, some 11p lower than the fee actually charged for non-examination courses. I would stress that these are, at present, preliminary results since there is still some debate about the proper

index to use for making inflation adjustments. Indexation on the basis of the Retail Prices Index appears to produce a rather different result from one based on Average Earnings and I am not sure which of these is, theoretically, the most appropriate. Nevertheless I believe that the principle is one which is well worth applying to the study of the relationship of fees and enrolments since it does suggest that, given a sufficiently large sample, it is the real fee level which is crucial in determining the size of demand for adult education (or at least for traditional formal non-vocational adult education).

You will appreciate that this does not imply that I would accept the principle that maximising income is necessarily a desirable objective, and for those authorities whose fees are already below the level of fee maximising there may be legitimate reasons for choosing not to increase the fee. It is, however, clear that an authority which chooses to maintain a fee above this point is pursuing a policy which is not in its financial interests.

I hope to have more time in the near future to continue the analysis and perhaps to produce something suitable for publication.'

'There is, perhaps, no branch of our vast educational system which should more attract within its particular sphere the aid and encouragement of the State than adult education. ..... But (these) are no reasons for not looking through the accounts, and making sure that all we can give is turned to real advantage.' [1]

But it is difficult for the State to give appropriate aid when 'the severe limitations on the information available have been noted so frequently as to need no further repetition.' [2]

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1. Winston S. Churchill, in letter to Education Committee of the Trades Union Congress, in The Organisation and Finance of Adult Education in England and Wales, Report of the Committee appointed by the Minister of Education in June 1952, London, HMSO, 1954.

2. Woodhall, M., The Scope and Costs of the Education and Training of Adults in Britain, ACACE, 1980.

APPENDIX A, by K.T. Elsdon

A COMPARISON WITH ADULT EDUCATION IN WEST GERMANY AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN ENGLAND AND WALES

published as an introduction to the German translation of 'Structure and Performance in Adult Education', by Mee and Wiltshire, 1978

It has been suggested to me that in its German translation this book should be prefaced by a brief discussion of two topics: a comparison of the kind of adult education which is the subject of the authors' research with its closest German equivalent, and a summary account of changes subsequent to the state of affairs described so graphically in Chapter 10.

The book's initial pages set out with admirable clarity the overall pattern of a post-school educational provision which has grown at varying speeds, responding to changing pressures and demands, but which has never been reduced to a clear and coherent system. With all the gains in flexibility and responsiveness this also has its drawbacks, of which one is the distinction between supposedly vocational and supposedly non-vocational courses. The authors explain it as far as may be possible, but it becomes more and more difficult to justify in the light of a reality of mixed personal motives and extremely varied economic and social requirements. It must nevertheless be mentioned here because it underlies the practice (whatever its justification) by which adult education - always the worst resourced element of the system of public education in Britain - has also been the victim of the most disproportionately severe cut-backs in times of crisis. It received less than 1% of national educational expenditure in 1968/69; the limited information available suggests that its proportion now is below half that amount.

There is no doubt that the part of British adult education which is best known abroad is the work of the university extra-mural departments and of the Workers' Educational Association. While of great importance as an effective way of making the educational resources and approaches of universities available to the general public, its quantitative role is relatively small. Its annual student enrolment according to the latest available statistics represents about one-ninth of that of the institutions which are the subject of the present enquiry. This non-university sector

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1. We acknowledge the kindness of the publishers, Geo. Westerman Verlag, in granting permission to incorporate this introduction in our report.

of adult education has, throughout its history, been less vocal in print although, compared with its relatively less dynamically changing partner, it has undergone a remarkable and varied process of development more particularly during the last twenty years. Much of this is recorded in a growing literature describing particular activities or institutions in periodical articles, in the form of dissertations,and in surveys or publications dealing in specialised topics. Such literature does not easily convey the general flavour of an area of work. The Russell Report[1] gives an overall impression but draws its information from as far back as 1969.

The time may well have come when a major descriptive book on the subject ought to be undertaken. This was not the objective of the research on which the present book rests. It is at once narrower and more fundamental in its concentration upon the ways in which structure and organisation in adult education affect the quality and content of the educational offering which it makes to its public. As such, though based upon a particular service in one country, it creates the instruments which enable similar judgments to be made about comparable work in similar and quite possibly in widely different circumstances.

If the kind of descriptive work I have suggested as desirable were available it would reveal very substantial similarities between the kind of adult education analysed by Mee and Wiltshire and that provided very commonly by the German Volkshochschule. This is hardly surprising, since both are the response of public education authorities to adult educational demands in modern industrial societies with a fairly high degree of regional or local independence and delegation of educational policy-making, and a low degree of central philosophical and curricular power. Both show the effects of a developing set of professional concepts and attitudes which shape institutional response. It is therefore not surprising that, for example, the Volkshochschule, English adult education as provided by the local education authorities, and to some extent Danish local adult education, have more in common with each other than any of them has with, say, adult education in France, Sweden, or the Netherlands.

Using the authors' typology, the VHS [2] is of course directly comparable to their specialist (Sp.) types, and these represent by far the largest

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1. Adult Education - a Plan for Development, HMSO, 1973
2. I am using Stellung und Aufgabe der Volkshochschule (DVV, 1978) as a most helpful summary for comparison, together with individual programmes.

Proportion of British provision. In both countries they range from small local institutions in borrowed or shared accommodation, directed by staff in their spare time from other, full-time occupations, to large ones with accommodation of their own which is available all day and every day, with full-time organising, teaching and support staff. In both instances, the institution's objective is to provide a broadly based curriculum which seeks to meet the known interests of the population in its catchment area, to identify new educational needs by means of increasingly sophisticated professional skills, and to embody them in new courses and other activities. Both are under the guidance, and ultimately responsible to, publicly elected bodies which control their finances, their staffing, and their overall policies, though curricular policy remains a professional prerogative.

There are, however, some differences. Unlike the programmes of the VHS, their British equivalents only occasionally include subjects intended to meet individual vocational needs or the broader ones of the labour market, since such provision is normally reserved to the colleges of further education. Quite apart from the questionable nature (on educational grounds) of this distinction, there can be no doubt that this limitation is a source of political and financial weakness. This is expressed in growing differences between the two countries in the level of staffing and funding.

Another difference which further weakens the British service lies in legal structure. Because the nature and amount of German adult educational provision is increasingly laid down in much greater, more specific and mandatory detail, it is now far more securely based than the exceedingly general phraseology of English law permits. Moreover, the delegation of power to a much more local level in Britain exposes the service to a wider variety of interpretations of the law.

In terms of size it is certainly true that in many parts of Britain there still remains a far larger number of small and very local centres. The total number of VHS is certainly smaller and they tend on average to be larger than their British equivalents.

There are differences, too, at the work face itself. One is the established tradition (at any rate until the recent crisis with its high fees) that the bulk of the programme in English adult education is based upon long courses which tended to become progressive through reasonably systematic grading. Shorter courses, such as those which (as the statistics of Stellung und Aufgabe suggest) are commoner in Germany are, or were, normally

limited to purposes such as introduction, experiment, or specialist supplementation. Another characteristic has developed strongly during the last ten to fifteen years and now covers about half the country. This is the systematic training of part-time teachers by means of local and regional schemes - various forms of internal self-government with the responsible participation of the student members have developed steadily in the public sector as a result of the growing influence of the Educational Centres Association.

Another strong feature has been the development of a penumbra of informal and independently organised educational and educative activities in association with publicly provided activity. By such means independent bodies or societies have access to accommodation, educational or organisational advice, and even teaching from the public service. In these ways both independent activity and the public service gain. The system can apply no less to local groups of large and powerful voluntary organisations such as the National Federation of Women's Institutes than to a modest local choir, an embroiderers' guild, or a language circle. Such systems of association may be considered as a partial make-weight for the fact that the educational activities of trades unions, churches and political parties (though growing) are far less elaborately developed than in Germany.

Apart from the virtual exclusion of vocational studies there are some less clear-cut differences in the balance of curricula. The universities and the Workers' Educational Association have always been concerned with adult education in all cognitive studies and their applications to current personal and social concerns. As a result, this subject range has been largely left to them by the local authorities' adult education service. There are many exceptions. Especially larger centres have entered this field effectively, or arranged for university and WEA provision to take place on their premises and as a full part of their programmes. Nevertheless, a general analysis of local authority adult education programmes shows* a lower proportion of what they call work in 'cognitive and intellectual skills' other than languages, than similar German statistics would reveal. At present the practice of most British adult educators in the LEA service would tend to give priority to the last four headings of the curriculum outlined on pages 10 to 11 of Stellung und Aufgabe. Many will try to cover the rest implicitly in that context, but rely upon their colleagues in university adult education to deal with it overtly and systematically. This may well be to their disadvantage in the present crisis.

*Compare Mee and Wiltshire's Table 5.2 on page 33.

Finally, it is necessary to mention one aspect which, though always present in both countries, has grown very substantially in Britain in recent years - namely, outreach work among those who are socially or educationally disadvantaged. This has now assumed substantial proportions. Moreover, owing to its difficulty and the demands it makes upon skill, time and resources, it now increasingly preoccupies adult educators.' In this field the effective cooperation between voluntary organisations, broadcasting, the public adult education service and the assistance of central government, even in present circumstances, may be regarded as remarkable testimony to the flexibility of the system and the professionalism of the service.

Since the 1950s there have been, increasingly, attempts to develop provision such as has been discussed here, not only in the institutions falling within Mee and Wiltshire's 'Sp.' categories, but also in schools and colleges of further education. Very large claims have been made particularly for the former; in any case there has been an undeniable tendency for policy decisions on structure at local levels to be based on such claims and assumptions. Some muted discussion began to surface in the 1960s but the first (and necessarily limited) attempt at a rational approach to these questions only came with the Russell Report in 1973. The present book is a selective and extremely compressed account of the only major and systematic attempt to investigate comparatively the performance in actual practice of the different structures. More recently, Community Colleges in England and Wales, edited by Bernard Jennings (National Institute of Adult Education, 1980) pursues the subject of adult education in that context further. Both are essential reading for anyone who wishes to know how, under British conditions, varying systems have performed in practice rather than in theory. The present text in particular can claim international interest because of its searchingly sensitive analysis of the relationships of organisation, structure and manning to the quality and character of the resulting educational provision and to the capacity of an adult education service for making optimal use of the human talent which is invested in it. It seems more than likely that its methods and findings could have applications beyond Britain.

How different structures and types of staffing have responded to the impact of economic crisis since the conclusion of the research project has been an apt if unwelcome test of its validity. Since then the system has been subjected to continuously growing stresses, without any sign of cessation. There are geographical variations, but nowhere have the effects been less than unfortunate and not uncommonly they are traumatic. Budgets have been

severely reduced, steep class fee rises have been and continue to be imposed, whole centres and premises closed, and more recently cuts in the exiguous full-time organising, teaching and support staffs are being made. What Mee and Wiltshire outlined as a threat in paragraphs 40 and 41 of their Conclusion has now become a reality which it is difficult to reconcile with the intentions of an Education Act whose flexibility was meant for a positive purpose.

Not surprisingly, adult educators are too busy with continuing emergencies to record their detailed effects in major published research. National statistical resources remain as described by the authors. Hard evidence on that scale is therefore difficult to come by, and unpublished. Moreover, local education authorities react at different rates. The difficulty of drawing conclusions from both local and national statistics is that they are usually based upon total enrolments. Not only is it rarely possible to distinguish what kinds of people are represented by these figures, but it is unknown what types and length of courses they represent. However, the commonest response to high fees has been to temper their wind to the student (and at the same time reduce teaching costs) by curtailing both courses and teaching periods. Students who previously were counted once for a course of typically 24 or 30 two-hour meetings had the financial burden eased by being asked to enrol for perhaps four consecutive courses of five meetings, each lasting one and a half hours. In this way what had been one enrolment for 48 or 60 hours now becomes four enrolments representing a total of 30 hours. However, these student hour totals are rarely available. Nevertheless, extant evidence shows clearly that enrolment figures, compared with previous ones, are heavily inflated and conceal a more substantial reduction in activity than is indicated.

A differential response between affluent and poorer areas of residence within a single education authority (where the same regulations and fee levels operate), has been identified wherever enquiry has been made. It suggests interesting possibilities of interpretation. These relate to what has been termed the 'Trenaman effect', from findings of the late Joseph Trenaman in the 1950s, since replicated by Johnson and Rivera in the USA and by many others elsewhere. This shows that, in general terms, the amount and possibly the quality of an individual's initial educational experience normally condition both the likelihood of that individual's subsequent participation in adult education and his occupational prospects and income bracket. With the progressive increase in initial education throughout the century and especially since the impact of the 1944 Education

Act, there has therefore been an in-built growth factor in the demand for adult education. Varying over the years, with predictable boom periods and more pronounced effects in affluent areas, it has averaged some 10% annually and caused a relatively rapid penetration down the social and income ladder.

This development continued while the level of class fees and the geographical accessibility of adult education posed no major problems. Thus, until the end of the the 1960s and for some years beyond in many parts of the country the average fee for a course of twenty-four 2-hour lessons represented no more than 2 - 4% of the average gross weekly wage of a skilled industrial worker. The average now represents 30% or more of that amount, and to it must be added higher transport costs to a diminished (and therefore more remote) number of centres. For the great majority attendance in adult education has therefore now become a function of disposable income much more than of personal interest.

The geographical differences which have been noted can thus be simply explained. In areas with a high proportion of affluent residents, the Trenaman effect (or built-in growth) continues to cushion the impact of fee increases on participation to an extent which varies according to the income level of local populations. Elsewhere fee increases in excess of the growth of disposable incomes have nullified the Trenaman effect, and led to increasingly sharp reductions in participation. Throughout the years of this development, the reductions have been accompanied by a noticeable change in the social composition of the student body. Within this overall tendency it may be noted that the attempt to cope by means of shorter courses affects the overall balance of the curriculum: there is a disproportionate reduction in the share of longer, progressive and those advanced courses in which student numbers must be smaller and therefore become 'uneconomic'. This development thus affects more particularly the teaching of foreign languages, or the kind of high level craft education which turns students into independent practitioners or produces new teachers.

One way in which adult educators try to overcome some of the social consequences of the crisis is to pour a great deal of energy and resources into highly subsidised or non-fee-paying outreach work among those who are most disadvantaged. This includes a variety of specialised activities and informal groups and, of course, large scale activity in adult basic education such as literacy work and English as a second language among immigrant

communities. The success of much of this provision is a source of encouragement and there can be no doubt of its value. At the same time the total numbers involved in it are a mere fraction of those from lower income groups who have been displaced from the system by high fees and budget reductions.

Other ways in which the system has responded to the crisis include large scale efforts to hive off classes into associated bodies, or the setting up of self-programming groups which may call on the services of a teacher at intervals, such as once a month. A rapidly growing practice involves the setting up of private classes by unemployed teachers in homes or hired premises. The hope that major voluntary educational organisations such as the Women's Institutes or Townswomen's Guilds might be able, at least partly, to fill the organisational gap has been frustrated: they have suffered no less from reduced grant aid and especially from the introduction or steep growth of rent charged by education authorities for their use of rooms in local schools.

In effect, the whole service has been severely affected, though in varying measure. There is no firmly documented and nationally based evidence which would enable us to make categorical statements about the ways in which different adult education structures have responded to the crisis. What can be stated with some confidence is that the degree and imagination of emergency action tends first of all to be related to the availability of specialised professional manpower in any particular area or institution. It depends equally on the degree of control which the individuals concerned have over their budgets and accommodation, however much these have been reduced. Because of the crucial importance of individual imagination and skill there are exceptions to be found to any broad statement. In general, however, an overall impression cannot be resisted: where funds and manpower are channelled to adult education through an institution (particularly a school) whose major purpose is other than adult education, the crisis tends to be exacerbated in addition to the fact that (as the authors show) professional skill and time tend to be in shorter supply. Where adult education is a specialised service in its own right, with professional full-time manpower, and especially where, in addition, it has its own buildings, diminished resources are often deployed with a high degree of inventiveness and passionate dedication to the service of a cause.

The change in the social composition of the membership cannot be averted anywhere. However, it is not impossible that in crisis conditions it brings with it new possibilities. These would point to the much more active involvement of the student membership in responsible self-government of

institutions most of which are largely and some entirely financed by fees in present conditions. This points to an acceleration of the development in recent years away from adult education institutions as mere cafeterias and towards their growth as active learning communities. We must hope that the time will not be too much delayed when access to adult education will again be regarded as a normal and necessary right of any citizen regardless of income. If the development towards self-government takes firm root by then we may yet look back upon the greatest setback which adult education in this country has ever suffered, as the time when we were forced to discover how it can be most effectively structured, and by what means that structure can best live and grow. It is for this reason that I am convinced that Mee and Wiltshire's research and the resulting book are now and will long remain fundamental to all rational considerations about the organisation of adult education. [1]

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1. Mr. Elsdon has written this introduction in a personal capacity. It should not be regarded as the official view of the Department of Education and Science.

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